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Lord Scarman: why we need a bill of rights

Stuart Cosgrove on scandal; Carole Angier on family scandals

South Africa: Shaun Johnson on white violence

Heaven on Earth, Inc

Duncan Campbell on how His Holiness the Maharishi's commodity brokers run the cosmic consciousness clan

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Q: What's The Big Idea?

A: There Isn't One
There Are Many

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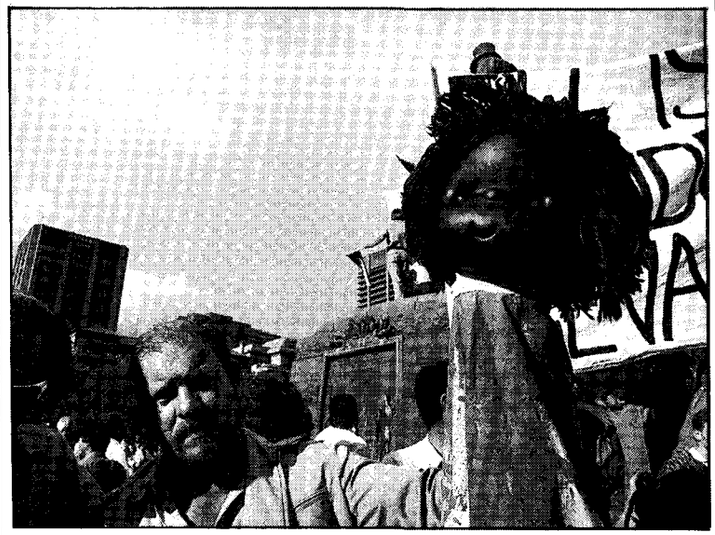

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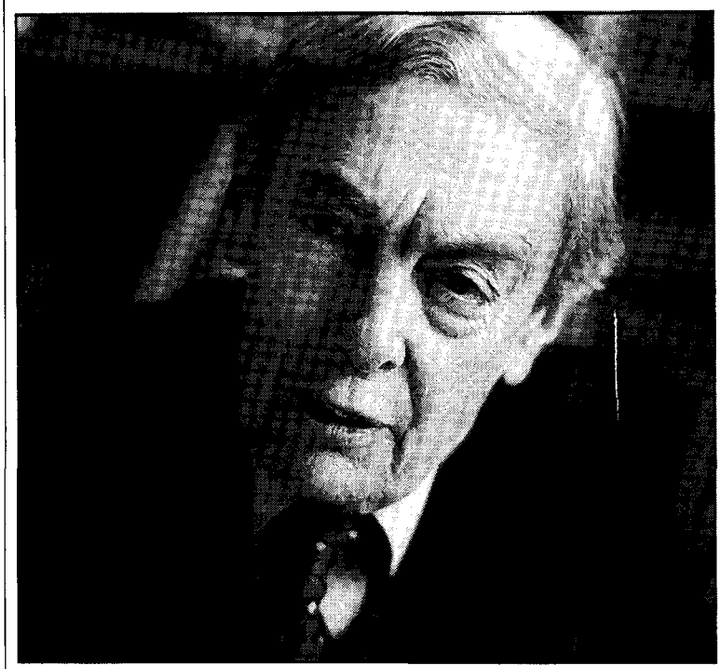

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EDITORIAL

Paper tiger

Patten's white paper seriously underestimates public support for tough green legislation

Our Secretary of State for the Environment, Chris Patten, chose Motor Show week to bash the car industry for its lack of greenness. With the unveiling of yet more high-performance dinosaurs and advertising copy like "if it were human, they'd test it for steroids" (Honda Civic) and "a 140 bhp thrust that gets you to 60mph in 8.6 seconds" (Mazda 323 Fastback), you can't blame him.

Patten himself came in for quite a bashing this week. His long-awaited white paper, *This Common Inheritance*, was widely criticised as long on polemic but short on new policies. He also got himself into a silly row with Greenpeace. Their swashbuckling seafarers launched a land attack with their own report *Why Britain remains The Dirty Man of Europe*, daring to suggest that the Dutch and the West Germans might just have something to teach us Brits on anti-pollution policies. Patten accused them of "political pollution", lambasted their director Lord Melchett as a "bashful former member of a polluting Labour government", and—the body blow—struck them off the guest list at a breakfast get-together with environmental pressure groups.

Patten's white paper is certainly the most attractive ever published—colour photographs, tasteful pale blue and green covers and recycled, unbleached paper throughout. Its real significance, however, lies less in the specific new policies, of which there are few in the short term, than in the process it reflects. Its formulation has forced major polluting departments such as transport and energy to contemplate key questions about their activities. It has also put into the public domain a range of ludicrous traffic and energy forecasts.

How credible is a projection that assumes a 40 per cent increase in new cars over the next 20 years on Britain's urban streets? With double and triple parking now a common sight, where are all these "ultimate driving machines" (BMW 525i) supposed to sleep at night?

There are some new green flags, of course—half a dozen initiatives on energy efficiency, a few on "civilising the car", a nod to further green consumerism and some specific measures to lock Whitehall into a green ratchet requiring annual reports, new resources and designated green prefects. The big issue of green taxes, mandatory efficiency standards and tighter regulation of the energy and car industries were lost, due to a combination of inflation, Treasury suspicion, vested interests and electricity privatisation. Given the growing weight of scientific advice which the government now accepts on global warming and other pollution, it runs the risk of fiddling while Rome burns unless these initial policies are quickly supplemented.

The opposition parties, meanwhile, have been busily drafting their own papers. Less hung up on market forces versus regulation ideological conflicts, and enjoying the freedom that being out of power brings, they contain a lot more on targets and taxes. Thirty per cent cuts in carbon dioxide by 2005 and Pollution Added Taxes are offered by the Liberal Democrats. Labour has a swathe of new policies, but will be under pressure to go beyond its current target of a freeze in carbon emissions by 2000. All these are important snapshots of the race that is developing to become the greenest political party.

We have come a long way in the past few years. The problem is that it's nowhere near fast enough. At this rate of progress, we'll be implementing home insulation programmes when the water is lapping over the Thames Barrier. Despite the best endeavours of the European Commission, the British political system has proved enormously difficult to move forward on this issue. So who is going to force the pace? The government all too readily sides with commercial interests whenever key choices have to be made, as has been shown in the past with introducing catalytic convertors or reducing fossil fuel use. Yet industry itself actually wants a lead from government. Labour has made strides but is still compromised by its attachment to the unions and old-style economic growth. The Green Party has the most honest policies, but couldn't strategise its way out of a recycled paper bag.

Ultimately it will be down to public concern and pressure. All the evidence from West Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and California suggests that people are quite prepared to pay a lot more for improving our degrading environment. Courageous politicians prepared to take tough decisions could go a long way on such a groundswell. Failure to take the wheel at this stage could make our ultimate driving machine a GTi Titanic—with "I love unleaded" stickers.

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Liaisons dangereuses

French foreign policy has always been a combination of idealism and Godfatherliness, corruption and humanism. This has been apparent in the policy towards Iraq: although in recent years the relationship has been built on thoroughly disreputable arms sales, it also has an avowedly socialist pedigree. Between the wars, France ran Syria and Lebanon while Britain occupied Iraq. The lure of friendship with the neighbour's boss, one's own boss's rival, still pulls heartstrings on both sides.

And, since 1945, France has been far more astute than Britain in making alliances with former colonies. French economic and educational aid (or, if one prefers, cultural imperialism) to the third world has been far better handled than our own. Under François Mitterrand, solidarity with the third world has been an article of faith. Saddam evidently admires France, and especially Gaullism: "I find a bridge between their policies and ours," he once said—the warmest endorsement of a non-Arab leader he has ever given.

President Mitterrand is today juggling his old alliances and modern *realpolitik*, Enlightenment idealism and base calculation, in his response to the Gulf crisis. His proposals to the United Nations this week encapsulate all the contradictions which have haunted French foreign policy for years. He wants peace. He wants Iraqi withdrawal. He wants to restore good relations with Saddam. He wants a plebiscite in Kuwait. (Who is to vote? The women previously excluded? Palestinians? The Iraqis now being shoved into vacant Kuwaiti apartments?) He wants everything at once.

Yet even if what he says is both utopian and calculatingly hypocritical—and it *is* both—it offers more hope than Thatcher or Bush. "Smash Saddam" is not a policy, but an emotional spasm. "Wait and see"—the UN consensus—means wait while children starve and Kuwait is destroyed. Mitterrand, however dubious his motives, is showing a way forward.

Poll position

Behind the scenes, Neil Kinnock's office is engaged in some anxious arm-twisting on the subject of electoral reform. The Amalgamated Engineering Union, backed by the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform, is sponsoring the mildest of composite motions at this year's Labour Party Conference, culled from 31 different resolutions, which politely requests that the party does no more than "consider" all electoral systems for the House of Commons, including the present "first past the post".

But even this is too radical for Kinnock and the national executive. They want the motion "remitted"—shelved, for further discussion—possibly until after the next general election. It is a sure sign that party leaders are no longer confident of knocking out the electoral reformers with a few mighty block votes. The Transport and General Workers' Union is coming tantalisingly close to backing the AEU, while NUPE and the MSF's votes also hang in the balance.

Proportional representation has already made rapid inroads with individual party members. A recent survey by Patrick Seyd of 5,000 members found that 58 per cent now support PR. Another poll published this week by the Electoral Reform Society shows that 45 per cent of the general public are sympathetic to PR, rising to 68 per cent among people who admit to knowing "just a little" or more about the subject. So there is no reason to remit the motion, unless the national executive offers proposals of its own. Kinnock has already agreed that a working party will examine alternative voting systems for the Scottish parliament, the Welsh and English regional assemblies, a reformed second chamber and the European parliament. It is nonsensical to leave the Commons out of the equation. But even remittance would be a victory of sorts—an acknowledgement that the issue can be deferred, but not buried.

Pig's breakfast

British beef is perfectly safe. Rarely has there been a government pronouncement that has come so quickly to mean the opposite of what it says. This is because it has been repeated so often since the beginning of 1988—when the dangers of mad cow disease (BSE) were first widely recognised—in order to soothe and allay beef-eaters' fears. But it has been obvious from the start that the Ministry of Agriculture has been trying to protect the British people, not from mad cow disease, but from being upset by the truth. And the truth is that it will take at least 15 years to be certain that BSE does not pose a threat to humans.

When, as late as this February, the government finally raised farmers' compensation from 50 to 100 per cent of the value of a healthy cow, suspected cases of BSE doubled in the first two weeks. Cattle are now believed to have contracted BSE from infected sheep remains in their food. The government stopped this practice but allowed it to continue for pigs and poultry on the grounds that it was perfectly safe, even though laboratory experiments on mice showed they could be infected through contaminated feed.

This week, MAFF announced that a pig has become infected with the disease through having diseased cows' brains injected into its brain. Ruminant offal is now to be banned from the feed of pigs, birds and all pets. The government is right to take this step—but the London Food Commission pressed for it from the beginning. What we have been given is bland reassurance, rather than information and decisive action. If British beef was safe before, what is it now?

Recessional

The current state of the British economy is like John Lennon's *Strawberry Fields*: nothing is real. Having fictionalised the unemployment level downwards with successive redefinitions, the government may well now be tempted to restore some of the excluded jobless to the statistics, in order to discourage workers seeking to avoid the erosion of their living standards by inflation.

Diplomats are paid to lie abroad for their country, Chancellors are paid to lie to their country for its own good. Nothing can be said to go wrong by a Chancellor because then it will get worse. Thus, two years on, we are still caught in Nigel Lawson's "temporary blip". John Major must say that his battle against inflation is working in order for it to start working, he must deny he is going cut interest rates until the moment when he cuts them, he must talk every so often of joining the ERM simply to hoick the markets up. Worst of all he must blithely talk of confidence while knowing that the British economy is teetering on the edge of disaster.

Mrs Thatcher always said it would take more than one term to cure the British disease. And the pain itself was a sign that the British disease of inflation was being squeezed out of the system. Now the disease has re-emerged unchanged. It may be time for the Prime Minister to adopt Brecht's sardonic solution for authoritarian governments: to dissolve the population and elect a new one.

Drastic action is needed to break the male culture of the Labour Party, claim Clare Short and co-authors of the Fabian pamphlet, *Quotas Now*. To make way for the women, they demand mandatory retirement of MPs aged 65-70. This would leave Denis Healey in place—he's 73—but would further deplete the beleaguered left. Tony Benn would be ousted, and, ironically, parliament's most able and committed feminist, Jo Richardson. In fact, age is no guide to calibre: Roy Hattersley is only 59, while Labour peer Douglas Houghton, 92, proved a robust champion of abortion rights during the recent legislation. Besides, quotas to combat sexism could lead to rival quotas to combat ageism... where would it end?

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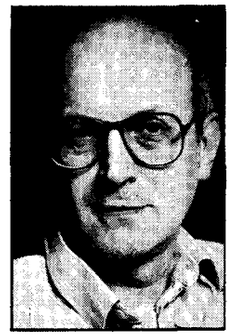
Diverse reports

Labour is reforming. But will the reforms close a door to new people and new ideas?



Stuart Weir

The Labour Party conference has few friends. Even in its current heavily sedated state, it remains unpredictable enough to upset the party managers; and the media, eager though they are to publicise any embarrassments the platform may suffer, strongly disapprove of the dissident activists or trade union "bosses" who disturb the party leaders' peace. As a policy-making body, the conference is unworkable: the sheer rush and muddle—with delegates discussing and voting on resolutions stitched together only a day or so before—make orderly debate impossible. And the whole performance dramatises (and exaggerates) the power the trade unions hold in the party through their block votes. (You don't get big business sitting in blocs at the Conservative Party conference and voting down ordinary members.)

In fact, of course, all the sound and fury signifies very little. The Labour Party, just as much as the Tories, is run by an oligarchy which rarely loses control of conference and normally makes the policy that counts (most of which goes through on the nod). Famous exceptions, like the decision to go unilateralist at Scarborough in 1960, serve finally to prove the rule. Even at its most bolshie, in the early 1980s, conference failed to remove final control of the party manifesto from the party's leaders in parliament.

The proposals for change that the party's national executive is tabling for next week's conference are therefore likely to command a great deal of sympathy. Few of the changes will come in till after the next election. But if the basic ideas are adopted—and Neil Kinnock's grasp on the party being what it is, that is pretty inevitable—they will bring about the biggest structural changes Labour has ever experienced. They will produce a party much closer to the usual model of west European social democratic and socialist parties than to Labour's traditions.

The basic idea is to have a "rolling programme" of Labour policy, so that at any given time the party line on everything would be clear and public. A new National Policy Forum—a body of about 200 members meeting three times a year and, in between, subdividing into specialist standing commissions—would work to a two-year cycle making and amending policies which annual conference would deal with in alternative years. Local parties and trade unions would no longer put their proposals directly to conference, but to the standing commissions. These commissions would (or only *could*?—it is not clear) present minority reports to conference alongside their main proposals.

The trade union vote at conference would be reduced from 90 to about 70 per cent, and would be reduced further if the party's individual membership expanded. Meanwhile, Labour MPs and MEPs would have a formal role on the new Policy Forum. Black members would also be guaranteed representation on the Policy Forum (by a mechanism which is unclear) and the national executive would be reformed to ensure that it had a minimum 40 per cent of women members.

The received wisdom is that Labour, now grown mature, is renouncing the adolescent dramas of its past

This all means more considered policy-making, more coherent debates at conference, more clarity, and more representation for black and women members. It also means that the party apparatus will control policy more firmly and dominate conference more certainly. The trade union vote is being kept large enough as a safeguard against any renewed "activist" agitation from the constituency parties and the new cycle will allow the party managers to determine the priorities for debate. Local parties will not be directly represented on the new Policy Forum, but only at one remove: through the regional parties which operate largely unseen by the general public and most party members. In other words, the party's decision-making will be more easily manipulable from above and less open to pressure from below.

The received wisdom is that Labour, now grown mature, is thus renouncing the adolescent passions and dramas of its past and has finally accepted its allotted role as a respectable party of alternative government. The romantic nonsense that the late Richard Crossman indulged in when he described the party members as "the battering-ram of change", ready always to renew the radicalism of the parliamentary party, has been cast aside. Rather, the party's activists are a dangerously unrepresentative crew of cranks and extremists who have to be kept out of sight and far from influence.

I welcome much in the new proposals. The old way is a mess and has to be reformed. But to remove the direct link between local parties and trade unions, meeting together to debate and determine their own priorities for change, and the national party's own major get-together, strikes me as a dangerous centralisation of power. Over the years, local parties have combined with pressure groups, both inside and outside the party, to use the annual conference as a platform to argue for, and even to achieve, major changes in policy and new priorities.

The damaging Bennite years colour attitudes towards this process, for the wounds have scarcely healed. But it can be a beneficial, even liberating, experience: social democrats have used conference as a sounding board for majority rule in southern Africa and entry into Europe; Labour's policies on the family, social security and low pay were framed during the 1970s by an alliance of unions like Nupe, child poverty pressure groups and local parties; and even now internal party groups are forcing the democratic agenda of electoral reform and constitutional change upon reluctant party bosses through conference.

The Labour Party has to renew itself. It is not going to do that if its organising oligarchy is too well defended, for the current oligarchy of largely career politicians—not simply the elected parliamentarians, but the party officials and attendant assistants and experts—is too narrow in composition and outlook. The party always was a coalition of all sorts and conditions of socialists, radicals and nonconformists; and its future will be in doubt if it is not able to gather up and involve new generations with new ideas. For all its failings, Labour's annual conference at least keeps one pluralistic door open; and the new proposals close it.

The labour movement's slogan, "Unity is strength", is not a defensive dogma; rather (as Bernard Crick wrote 30 years ago in the *New Statesman*), it is a recognition of the dynamic of diversity.

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TAKING LIBERTIES

Jolyon Jenkins

Three facts: 1) we are heading for a recession; 2) unemployment is rising; 3) crime is increasing. Is 3) related to 1) and 2)?

No one knows what causes crime. Politicians feel reassured by this, since it allows them to invent theories unencumbered by evidence. John Patten, the home affairs minister, likes to tell how, when he entered the Home Office, he sent his civil servants a memo asking: "What causes crime?" "I still haven't had a straight answer," he says—assuming the role of the plain man who's been short-changed by boffins.

But he could do worse than look at a booklet just published by his own research department: *Trends in crime and their interpretation*, by Simon Field. In fact, no one should be allowed to say another word about the subject until they have absorbed its findings.

The main message is that if you want to predict trends in crime, watch the stockmarket index. But it's necessary to distinguish between offences against property and those against people. According to Field, when people are increasing their expenditure very little, or even cutting back, property crime goes up. When people are increasing their spending quickly, property crime slows down, or falls. With personal crime, it's the other way round. During periods of rapid consumption, personal crime goes up fast too. During periods of slow consumption, personal crime slows. So the depression of 1980-81 meant a surge in property crime; and the boom of 1987-89 meant a rise in personal crime.

Why should this be? Field's explanation is that if your standard of living goes up, you are less tempted to steal things. Of course, this might be cancelled out by the fact that other people's standard of living is going up too, meaning that there's more to steal. But people who are prone to commit crime are more likely to be affected by fluctuations in the economy than their potential victims, so the "don't need to steal" factor will overcome the "more to steal" factor. Unemployment, Field finds, does not in itself affect property crime.

When it comes to personal crime, it's the behaviour patterns of the victims that are more important. People who have more money go out more often, and so are more likely to get mugged. At the same time, the more beer people drink, the more likely they are to commit a personal crime. And unemployment (particularly long-term unemployment) also leads to more crimes of violence against the person. In other words, it's most dangerous to be a yuppie surrounded by beer-drinking, unemployed neighbours.

For those of a leftward persuasion, Field's work contains faintly encouraging news. The crime trends of the eighties aren't the fault of unmarried mothers, loony left teachers, the sixties or original sin. You can blame burglaries on Geoffrey Howe, and muggings on Nigel Lawson. But you can't blame everything on unemployment, as some left-wingers would like to do. As we slide into another economic depression, the immediate practical message is clear: don't bother with personal alarms; install window locks. In the longer run, it looks as though a low crime rate will be achieved in a society that's stable, egalitarian, not too prosperous, with low unemployment, and where beer is very expensive. Maybe the Greens will do the trick?

OIL SPECULATOR LOSES SHIRT
SADDAM WITHDRAWS FROM KUWAIT
LOCAL CATS DISCOVER NEWSNIGHT SANDPIT
OIL PRICE PLUMMETS
FREE GALLON WITH EVERY GLASS

THE "NIGHTMARE SCENARIO"

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DIARY

Sean French

When I say that my last week's holiday was like being in Hades, I don't mean to imply that I had a bad time. In reality, and notwithstanding certain stresses and strains, the opposite was the case. What I have particularly in mind are those figures of myth who were condemned for eternity to some appropriate punishment, such as Sisyphus pushing up a hill a boulder that always rolls down before it reaches the summit.

Before leaving on holiday, I always pack a number of books that would be more appropriate for an 18th-century voyage to Australia. This year, my luggage contained eight books for a seven-day holiday, among which were *Dombey and Son* and the first volume of Proust.

Swann's Way is in that most depressing category of literature, a book whose end is actually receding from me as I read. I once got about a hundred pages into it, but that was so long ago that I now had to start it again, or in the case of this holiday, never quite got round to starting it again. All I did manage to read was an extremely short and very good thriller by the recently defunct Florida writer, Charles Willeford, called *The Burnt-Orange Heresy*, followed by about half of George Gissing's reputed masterpiece, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, which actually reads like Thoreau's *Walden*, rewritten by Bernard Levin and Godfrey Smith in collaboration—and I don't mean that as a compliment.

For many holidays the resulting surplus reading matter might have been a trivial inconvenience, but we spent last week on a walking holiday in the rocky hills of Provence, and I mean a *real* walking holiday in which you carry all your luggage on your back like a far from teenage mutant turtle.

No deity could have contrived a more effective way of punishing me for my pretentiousness than forcing me to carry my unread literary classics across mile after mile, day after day. As I struggled up that final slope in the early evening, a still, small voice would start up inside my brain, saying: "Are you enjoying your Proust and Dickens now, you pretentious bastard?"

And this was not my only sisyphean punishment of the holiday. In my last long walking holiday I suffered from such bad blisters that I was actually gobbling aspirin as I walked, which must have done something to counteract the health benefits of the exercise.

While suffering the after-effects of that, I decided that I hadn't spent enough money on my walking boots. So about a year ago I bought those ludicrously expensive boots that people have been wearing around town as a fashion accessory. They are massive in size and strikingly resemble the boots attached to the old-style diving suit that Tintin wore while searching for Red Rackham's treasure.

I did all the things you are supposed to do, such as wearing them for ages before a serious walk to break them in. But after one day's trek, my feet were so blistered that the boots were entirely unwearable, so they too went into the rucksack for the duration. In *King Lear* the blinded Gloucester spoke of seeing the ways of the world "feelingly", and in somewhat similar fashion I was made feelingly aware of certain defects of my one. A line of Vladimir's from *Waiting for Godot* came to mind: "There's man all over for you. Blaming on his boots the faults of his feet."

Returning after having heard no news at all, I was struck by how startlingly depressing almost every item of news is. Admittedly there is something darkly comic about all last year's talk of the end of history brought about by the final triumph of capitalism being followed by an immediate worldwide recession. However, the thought of a worldwide recession joining up with our own little homegrown version, which we have been nurturing over the past few years, seems desperately unamusing—unless there is some economics law that I don't know about, which says that two recessions make an economic boom.

And if the prospect of the imminent third world war isn't bad enough, a friend of mine, Anne Boston, wrote an article in this week's *Sunday Independent* about contact lenses. She'd asked me before writing the piece if (as a fellow wearer) I knew any good anecdotes on the subject, so I assumed that she was writing a few lighthearted ruminations. Instead, she provided hair-raising findings about soft contact lenses making you go blind. I gave up hard lenses because they did once temporarily do that. I wore them for too long one day and felt for the next 24 hours as if someone were jabbing matchsticks into my eyeballs while holding a Coke bottle in front of them.

My optician assured me that soft lenses were much safer, but now it seems that they do terrible things like provoking the growth of blood veins in the transparent cornea that you actually use for looking through. Eventually it can cloud up like frosted glass.

I've spent much of my time since reading this horror story, trying to search for veins in my corneas, which is about as easy as scratching the back of your right hand with your right hand.

The only reading matter that cheered me up was that on last week's letters page. I was, of course, deeply shocked by a letter that described your humble correspondent in nakedly sexist terms, but my attention was especially caught by a letter expressing horror at R W Johnson, written by someone called Alfreda Benge.

I know almost nothing about Alfreda Benge (and I'm assuming there aren't two people bearing that name), except that she appeared on, and designed the cover of, one of my favourite albums. I suspect that scattered around the country there are a few hundred people who secretly love Robert Wyatt's bizarre and wonderful first solo album, *Rock Bottom*, and assume that no one else has ever heard of it.

Wyatt used to be the drummer in Soft Machine, a group who were associated with Pink Floyd but never achieved their financial success. Wyatt's career seemed to have been destroyed in the early seventies when he broke his back in an accident. But then his extraordinary album came out, one of those rare works in rock music at least that sounds improvised, chaotic and yet works flawlessly.

I think Benge was Wyatt's wife. Anyway, I'm glad she reads the *Staggers*, as no one seems to call it anymore, even if it makes her angry.

ROGER WODDIS

Carry on Crawling

The BBC, which has dropped "Dunrulin'", a comedy series written by John Wells and Alistair Beaton, about the Prime Minister and her family in retirement, denies it has done so for political reasons

Let no one think we're lacking balls
  And throwing in the towel.
We never yield to government,
  Such is our firm avowal.
You can believe top-level chaps,
  Like Checkland, Fox and Powell.

The rumours that you may have heard
  Are wicked and ill-founded:
We gauge our love of liberty
  And all that jazz unbounded.
It's just that Mark was badly drawn,
  And Carol not well-rounded.

One falls about at Chaplin's tramp
  And yells at Buster Keaton,
But one is not amused by Wells,
  And hardly smiles at Beaton.
(It's not that Scottish fellow's fault
  He never went to Eton.)

Oh, freedom is a precious thing,
  Beloved from Pole to Pole,
And *glasnost* that we all applaud
  Inspires the Russian soul.
What bothers us who run the Beeb
  Are cads we can't control.

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Mikki Rain

ENLIGHTENMENT

Heaven on earth

There's more to former Beatles guru Maharishi than transcendental meditation. Duncan Campbell finds a multimillion-dollar religious cult up to its neck in commodity broking and real estate, and promising earthly paradise on the outskirts of Skelmersdale

Surrounded by flowers and with his retinue of loving, clean-cut, expensive-suited western followers, the bearded guru of transcendental meditation is back in town. This Monday, at Vlodrop, Netherlands, His Holiness, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, summoned the world press to hear him "describe the measures by which his worldwide transcendental meditation movement is resolving the Gulf crisis".

Even more astonishing claims are routinely reported to top-level members of the TM cult. Late last year, the movement's Governor General for Europe, Dr Geoffrey Clements, wrote to TM Governors that the removal of the Berlin wall was a "direct result of Maharishi's special attention". Embarrassed by the leak of this letter, Peter Warburton, TM's UK press officer and Minister for Information and Inspiration of the World Government of the Age of Enlightenment, said that the letter "wasn't supposed to be a public document".

Behind the grand claims, glossy brochures, scientific-sounding language, and a plethora of imposing international organisations, there is evidence of something more ordinary than an Age of Enlightenment. TM is in effect a New Age philosophy blended with profitable courses, products and gimmicks which achieve real power over people's lives. Many Christians further object that the movement is a form of Hinduism in pseudo-scientific disguise, although other Christians in TM say that they are comfortable with its religious aspects.

After learning meditation, members are encouraged to take more expensive training courses to "achieve higher levels of consciousness". The next higher level, Sidha (one who has

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achieved perfection), costs £1,200. Meditators who take more courses or who work for the movement may be appointed Governors or, higher, Ministers. A key trick learnt by Sidha-level members is levitation or "flying". Flying, however, simply consists of hopping or bouncing on your buttocks while in the lotus position. In public demonstrations, top Sidha meditators bounce on springy mattresses in order to achieve higher and longer hops.

The cult's British leader, the "Right Honourable" Stephen D Benson, Chief Minister of the World Government of the Age of Enlightenment (Great Britain), now lives in a luxurious five-storey Kensington Palace Gardens mansion, Hyderabad House. The house was bought for a reported £10 million in 1982 by one of the TM movement's Swiss corporations. A Bentley and a Rolls-Royce, owned by leading TM members, have been seen parked in the driveway. The Chief Minister's London mansion is one of several expensive properties bought by the cult on the proceeds of its business activities. The others are the famous national TM headquarters at Mentmore Towers, Buckinghamshire, and Roydon Hall in Kent.

The cult's principal source of income is from selling TM (an introductory course costs £165) and from the subsequent and assiduous promotion of courses and events in which followers are promised the bliss which many find elusive. The latest sales promotions for TM include newspaper publicity and advertisements, and a network of private medical clinics that sell "Maharishi Ayur-Veda" medicine. Four days before Maharishi arrived in Europe, a team of TM doctors called a press conference in the Waldorf Hotel, London, and said they were setting up a Maharishi College of Natural Medicine.

A Maharishi "ideal village" has also been established at Skelmersdale, near Ormskirk, Lancashire. It celebrated its tenth anniversary on Sunday night. More than 500 meditators and their families now live there. The TM township includes a Maharishi school, health centre, shops and about 70 businesses including estate agents and investment advisers. The village is now called European Sidhaland, and has a clear caste structure in which Sidhas and Governors dominate. Ormskirk might not be the most obvious site in Britain for "Heaven on Earth", but the movement was fortunate to obtain houses cheaply from the Skelmersdale Development Corporation. Skelmersdale even has a TM temple. Meditators meet at the Maharishi Golden Dome in the centre of their settlement and meditate together to produce "coherence".

What is surprising about TM is the continuing gullibility of some journalists who resign their scepticism in the face of the welter of apparently serious scientific claims. A single article about TM or one of its related spin-offs, invariably including a free phone number for information, can bring thousands of new recruits.

Many of those who have joined and then left TM are bitterly critical of its commercial aspects and unfulfilled promises. In the US three years ago, Robert Kropinsky, a former member, won $137,890 damages after a Philadelphia court found that the TM movement had defrauded him with false promises of mental bliss and neglected to warn him about the possibility of adverse side-effects. Most of Kropinsky's claim was overturned in an appeal this summer, but financial settlements have been made with other claimants against TM, the movement admits.

One former British meditator who may have experienced severe side-effects from TM is Pamella Bordes. She told the *Daily Mail* six months ago how in June 1988 she had destroyed much of the furnishings of *Sunday Times* editor Andrew Neil's flat, as well as his clothing. She did not mention that she had done so in the middle of learning the advanced TM-Sidhi technique. The press reported the incident as the result of her suspicion that Neil had been dating another woman. But her meditating colleagues, who were present on the evening she came to the TM centre and talked about smashing the flat in a frenzy, suspected it had more to do with TM. "It's pretty well known that when people learn the TM-Sidhi technique, they can get spaced out to the extent that they don't know what they're doing," explained a fellow-student of Ms Bordes. "People will almost brag about it. It's well known that people have cracked up." After the incident, TM teachers declined to allow Ms Bordes to continue.

Despite the movement's claims that TM automatically makes for enlightenment and success in business, a succession of TM businesses at Skelmersdale collapsed in the mid-1980s. These include the showpiece Age of Enlightenment Company Ltd, whose creditors were owed £333,000.

With the decline in popularity of TM among students, the movement has focused on business and medicine to keep TM sales buoyant. A London-based consultancy, Maharishi Corporate Development International, promotes TM to City businessmen. In the United States, a major commodity futures company forming part of the cult's American campus has been accused by investors of overcharging and high-pressure sales tactics. The International Trading Group Ltd in Fairfield, Iowa, received commissions and fees totalling more than $250 million between 1984 and 1989. A series of complaints about overcharging led in 1988 to the company's being fined $90,000.

The cult's British leader lives in a luxurious five-storey mansion costing £10 million. A Bentley is normally parked outside

Globally, the Maharishi movement operates a range of trading companies which have more in common with merchant banking than meditation. Maharishi International Trading Group Ltd and Maharishi Diamond Ltd were set up in 1988. They are owned by Swiss-based members and Isle of Man nominee companies. Their activities include trading in diamonds and ship-broking.

The latest boost to TM sales, launched in 1985, is Maharishi Ayur-Veda medicine. Dr Roger Chalmers, who spoke at last week's press conference, is confident that adoption of Maharishi Ayur-Veda would lead to a "50 per cent reduction in the need for medical and surgical care throughout the NHS". Dr Chalmers and a colleague, Dr Leslie Davis, are currently being investigated by the General Medical Council following complaints by Aids patients of serious professional misconduct. The doctors admit that they have prescribed scientifically untested Maharishi herbal pills, for which patients are charged $6,000 a year, as a remedy for Aids.

Specialists in the natural medicines movement think the Maharishi claims are a sham. "I know people who have been sucked into that movement and spat out the other end," said Leon Chaitow, a leading osteopath and consultant. Maharishi-style meditation, said Chaitow, has been "hyped up to be something it isn't... you might as well say Coca-Cola or bananas [as a Mantra]... Well-off, ostensibly quite well-educated people are prepared to give up everything to become disciples. They spend thousands of pounds and hours trying to bounce around on their knees. It does show what a mess we're in."

A particularly brazen example of the Maharishi's operation's piling up treasures on earth—to borrow a biblical phrase—is the recently launched US property business, the Heaven on Earth Development Corporation, which has headquarters in Malibu, California. It wants to build 50 Maharishi Cities of Immortals. Thanks to TM, says Heaven on Earth, Inc, these communities will be free of stress, pollution, crime and noise.

Tempted? If you think that the next life sounds like too long to wait, a piece of the heavenly action can be purchased in the here and now—for between $300,000 and $1 million a home. ●

Additional research by David Baxter and Alex Holmes.

In Britain, the sacred and the profane join in a new cult sales lines from Maharishi Global Trading Enterprises Ltd. On offer for 1990 are astrological forecasts ($50), Maharishi-style gems, and Yagyas or traditional Vedic sacrifices. For a mere $1,000, Maharishi world headquarters at Delhi will do you a fine sacrifice, with trimmings. A 45-day supply of Ambrosia tablets can be purchased for $45. A jar of Nectar of Immortality costs $50. Maharishi steel tongue scrapers sell for $3, a silver tongue scraper goes for $12. (there are no instructions in the sales brochure).

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Gideon Mendel/Magnum

White heat

Black violence in South Africa conceals a sharp increase in white racist attacks on blacks. But how large is the monster lurking beneath the surface of conservative white society?

Above, the nightmare made flesh in the play "Smallholding", a Johannesburg stage production whose "multiple choice" ending explores two contrasting scenarios for the possible future of South Africa

Johannesburg

In the crowded black bar of the Roodepoort hotel (whites still drink alone next door though the law has changed; old South African habits), James Sono was chuckling while his friend Eric Nqabeni told a joke. It was Saturday night around 10.30.

Douglas Molahleli had just ordered a drink, Violet Yeki was waiting to serve a customer, and Johannes Dikotla, her boyfriend, was looking lazily out over the throng. Some were dancing, some were playing snooker; most were well on the way to over-indulgence and hangovers to carry them through the weekend in the nearby townships. Only one person, a waitress, happened to be facing the door when a white man opened it, leaned over, and calmly rolled what looked like a metal ball across the floor of the bar. James Sono heard her say: "Look, that white man is throwing a bomb."

The man was gone before the M-26 hand grenade exploded. It killed one patron, injured another 21, and sprayed blood all over the four walls of the bar room. "Rivers of blood," said Manuel de Freitas, the Portuguese South African hotel owner later, unconsciously echoing the words of Enoch Powell.

This blast in the nondescript town abutting Johannesburg, occurred several weeks ago. Already it is but one statistic in what Wim Booyse, a political analyst, calls an "astronomical increase in right-wing terrorism" in South Africa since the

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changes announced by President F W de Klerk in February.

In the public perception (both local and international), violence in South Africa has come to be associated with the appalling wave of political-cum-tribal ("black-on-black") killing which has engulfed Transvaal townships. This is understandable: it is the most concentrated bout of South African bloodletting in living memory. But, conveniently, —for white racist fanatics, that is—it has also served to obscure the persistent and escalating trend of attacks by whites on blacks.

The "armed struggle", including its terroristic component (meaning attacks on unarmed civilians), is not the invention of the black resistance. In a sense it has been on loan from the 19th-century Boer guerrillas—and many of their descendants now want it back. If there is one prediction on which usually fractious observers here agree, it is that white, right-wing, terror attacks will loom increasingly large in South African politics in months to come.

Violence has always been part of politics here, and no one group enjoys sole usage of it as a political tactic. Booyse's best scientific efforts suggest that the number of "terror" attacks in the first six months of this year is the highest in the country's history. By his reckoning, there were 138 incidents of "revolutionary terror" between January and June, 197 incidents of "sub-revolutionary terror", and 6,231 of "agitational terror". These figures pre-date the current spasm of township fratricide.

His categorisations are less important than the trends they represent. For the record, Booyse distinguishes between systematic attacks (with limpet mines, commercial explosives, grenades and automatic rifles), more random ones (home-made petrol bombs and the like), and spontaneous incidents of intimidation and thuggery, which "disrupt the social order".

His conclusion is that, last year, barely 1 per cent of these could be ascribed to the white right—the rest to the myriad "anti-apartheid forces". This year, in the wake of the de Klerk reforms, that percentage climbed quickly to 7 per cent and is rising almost daily. "While there has been a gradual increase in left-wing terror," he says, "the increase from the right wing has been astronomical."

He includes among the latter what has become known as "system terror"—where quasi-state bodies, such as the "Civil Co-operation Bureau", assassinated activists. But the most striking development remains right-wing attacks on black people, randomly chosen like the Saturday-night drinkers in the Roodepoort hotel.

Janice Grobbelaar, a professor of sociology at the University of South Africa, agrees that the "proliferation" of right-wing groups since February has been astounding. Even South African Police officials concede the trend. Lieutenant Nina Barkhuizen says the SAP was aware of at least 30 "terrorist attacks" in June alone—a neat, if chilling, average of one a day. When all the "scores" are in, the statistics for the ensuing months are likely to prove even higher than that. The Independent Board of Inquiry into Informal Repression (IBIIR) has offered a preliminary estimate suggesting that the death toll in the month of July rose to more than 60.

"Because of the fact that in many of these incidents commercial explosives were used, it indicates that the right wing were responsible," says Lieutenant Barkhuizen. "It is not clear, however, whether those responsible were right-wing organisations or individual fanatics looking for sensation. We tend to believe it is individuals rather than organisations."

This is indeed the key question, and it suits the government's purposes to show that mavericks, rather than organisers, are responsible for wreaking the havoc. Police General Herman Stadler, while insisting that his men are monitoring the right assiduously, says most of the groups are "one-man bands... full of hot air". Many people who are not otherwise prone to believe the police, fervently hope that he is right. The government has itself shown signs of doubt—as early as April, senior sources expressed the fear that "ultra-right-wingers might commit atrocities to destroy the negotiation process".

The "respectable face" of the white right, the parliamentary opposition party of Dr Andries Treurnicht, vehemently disavows right-wing violence. Even the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) of Eugene Terreblanche admits only to bully-boy tactics, not bombs. (It should be noted, however, that Terreblanche recently issued a call for "a million rifles for a million whites".)

But besides the better-known groups, academic observers have recorded the claimed existence of as many as 70 organisations of the fanatical right. "Claimed", because the existence as structures of many of them has never been proved. Nevertheless Booyse has provided a worrying breakdown of known groups: 15 are "cultural/political", two are "women's associations", seven claim to be church-linked, four are political parties, eight are "paramilitary", and four are trade unions. The organisations range from think-tanks to small armies, and several include former senior members of the security establishment: at last count, at least one brigadier and two colonels were known to be active. ▶

The white-right backlash

Chronology of right-wing violence

August-September 1990

- A bomb attack on a black taxi rank in Pretoria, at rush hour. Commercial explosives were used—a sign of right-wing involvement.
- A grenade blast at a Mayfair, Johannesburg, hotel frequented by members of the ANC.
- A fatal grenade attack on the Roodepoort Railway Station's black section.
- Two bombs detonated at the offices of de Klerk's Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld* in Johannesburg.
- A bomb at a cinema showing "progressive" films in Potchefstroom.
- A blast—again involving commercial explosives—at a National Party office in Pretoria.

New ultra-right groups

Emerged in 1990

Wit Bevrydingsleer (White Freedom Army)
Wit Kommando (White Commando)
Blanke Front (White Front)
Afrikaner Fascist Coalition
Gemeente van die Verbondsvolk (Congregation of the Covenant People)
Flaminke (Flamingos—a vigilante group)
The Odal Clan
Brandwag (Sentinels)
Organisation about Truth in South Africa
Aksie Selfbeskerming (Action Self-Protection)
Boere-vryheidsbeweging (Boer Freedom Movement)
Afrikaner National Socialists
Wereld Apartheidsbeweging (World Apartheid Movement)
Kommandoleer (Commando Army)
Magaksie Afrikaner Nasionalisme (Power Action Afrikaner Nationalism)
Genootskap vir Regte Afrikaners (Society for Right-thinking Afrikaners)
Orde van die Dood (Order of Death)
Orde Boerevolk (Order of the Boer Nation)

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There is another notable factor. Booyse says he is "astonished by the high percentage of English-speaking South Africans I came across in the right-wing movements". Many are of British descent; still more have Rhodesian connections. Observers accept that it is easy enough for fanatics to issue statements and claim the existence of structures. But it is in the numbers of actual attacks that the cause for concern truly lies (see table).

New organisations proclaim their existence with extraordinary regularity (see table). After a bomb exploded on 6 July at a black taxi rank in Johannesburg, injuring dozens, the previously unheard of "Order of the Boer Nation" said it was responsible. Barend Hendrik Strydom, who gunned down 12 black pedestrians in central Pretoria in 1988, claimed to be a leader of the Wit Wolwe (White Wolves). A police investigation found "no solid evidence that there was such an organisation as the Wit Wolwe, and it was possible that different individuals were using the name to create a psychosis of fear among the public," according to General Stadler.

But people claimed to be "Wolwe" have been very active since. In May police arrested two whites in connection with the murder—apparently random—of two black township dwellers on a roadside near Pretoria. A witness alleged that, before shooting the men in the face and stomach, the whites asked them "what they thought of the Wit Wolwe". Pamphlets bearing a "White Wolf" logo are commonplace.

No one quite knows the size or capabilities of the monster lurking beneath the surface of conservative white society. Racist anger could be bursting through at random. Equally, right-wing guerrillas could be establishing networks and command and supply structures. The truth is probably somewhere in between; cold comfort for black commuters, exposed each day to the risk of queuing up for transport back to Soweto or Mamelodi.

Attention is focused, for the moment, on a man who took the process further than any other, barring Strydom. Piet "Skiet" Rudolph ("skiet" is the Afrikaans word for "shoot"), deputy leader of the small but vociferous Boerestaat Party, went "underground" in a blaze of self-publicity. Dubbed the "Boere Pimpernel", he declared war on President de Klerk's government and, in videotapes supplied to the media, claimed to be putting in place a national army of guerrilla fighters. In the tapes, Rudolph sits in front of the old Transvaal Republic's *Vierkleur* flag, and is flanked by hooded men—IRA style—who brandish weapons acquired in a recent spate of heists at official state armouries. "This is the beginning of the counter-revolution," he says. "We are now going for the ANC's throat."

Police say he is mad and not as dangerous as he sounds. But a lot of people, including black leaders, take him and what he represents very seriously. Rudolph was arrested in Pretoria this week, and it is believed that he has confessed to the bombing of Melrose House—where the Boers sued for peace in 1902—and an arson attack on the British Embassy. But few believe that his capture will halt the trend. It is estimated that there are between 660,000 and 850,000 white rightists in South Africa. Of these, some 10 per cent are "politically active". Even if only a fraction of those are "violently active", the potential for chaos is enormous.

Several suspected far-rightists have been arrested in recent months, but most were discharged for lack of evidence. In the meantime, the attacks continue: the offices of left-wing and even government-supporting newspapers are bombed, death threats—the new fashion being to send them by fax—are unremarkable. Local media are filled with optimistic reports about the "cessation of hostilities" between government security forces and guerrillas of the African National Congress's military wing, Umkhonto weSizwe. Very few are prepared to concede that the historic breakthrough might give way to another armed struggle; more effective and more brutal. ●

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Scarman speaks

Lord Scarman has been publicly arguing the case for a bill of rights for 15 years. He now expects to live long enough to see it made law. Here he explains why it is so important

Stuart Weir: When did you first decide that it was desirable for this country to have a bill of rights and why?

Lord Scarman: I formulated my views really in my first four years as the first chairman of the Law Commission, which was created in 1965. From that time on I have been aware how weak our law is on human rights—in fact, human rights isn't an English legal term at all. It means nothing in English law. The word "human" adds nothing to the word "rights". I was familiar with the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the large number of international covenants of human rights, the American and French declarations, and, of course, many former British colonies, for whom we had written constitutions, had incorporated a bill of rights in their constitutions. The constitution of India has one of the most elaborate and brilliantly drafted bill of rights that I know. It is the only constitution that really covers social and economic rights as well as civil liberties and fundamental rights.

I looked at the English common law and came to the conclusion, first of all, that we must revise our administrative law. Secondly, we couldn't do a proper job unless we had a bill of rights that provided criteria by which the judges could test the lawfulness of the exercise of governmental power. We had no criteria worth sixpence.

During my last three years at the commission, I was also presiding over a huge investigation into the disturbances in Northern Ireland. That experience was traumatic for me. I began to realise that, if individuals weren't clothed with rights which could be enforced in courts, you were not going to get anywhere. There were a number of very important cases. There was the question of the interrogation in Northern Ireland of IRA suspects. They were interrogated while put up against a wall with their arms wide apart. That case went to the European Court of Human Rights and was held to have been one of harsh and unusual treatment.

Then there was a prisoner, a Mr Golder, who made a complaint of misconduct by a prison officer. His complaint was ignored by the prison governor. He wanted to consult a

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solicitor but he was not allowed access to one, so he took his case to Europe and the European Court found that he had suffered as a result of an infringement of his human rights. But what could he do about it? By this time he was out of jail. It was no longer of the slightest importance to him. That case convinced me that it is no good just waiting for the European Court. You must get immediate court relief. And if the European Convention was incorporated into our law, Mr Golder could have taken his case to an English judge, and the English judge could have seen it was a flagrant breach of the man's rights. You must be allowed access to a solicitor. And he'd have got it there and then.

Anthony Barnett: Did you put the idea of a bill of rights to the government?

We discussed it on the commission, of course. But we were part of the established machinery of government: and, whereas we could propose items for study and reform, we could not study and reform them unless we had the assent of the Lord Chancellor. So we were very much kept in order. The government—it happened to be a Labour government at the time, the Conservative government later was just as unenthusiastic on this—wasn't going to have us working on law reforms of which it didn't approve.

AB: One argument against your case is that the European Convention is itself a very unsatisfactory document because it is so full of exceptions where the right is not available.

It is full of exceptional clauses, yes. But you will never have a general declaration of human rights without exceptions. And the value of the European Convention is that it not only gives you, for instance, the right to freedom of expression, but it lists the exceptions and the *only* exceptions allowed by law to the exercise of that right. And it prefaces those exceptions by saying a government can rely on an exception only where it is necessary in order, for instance, to protect national security or public morality and so forth.

AB: But these phrases "public morality" and "national security" do seem very catch-all. In the United States, the exceptional circumstances are very tightly defined.

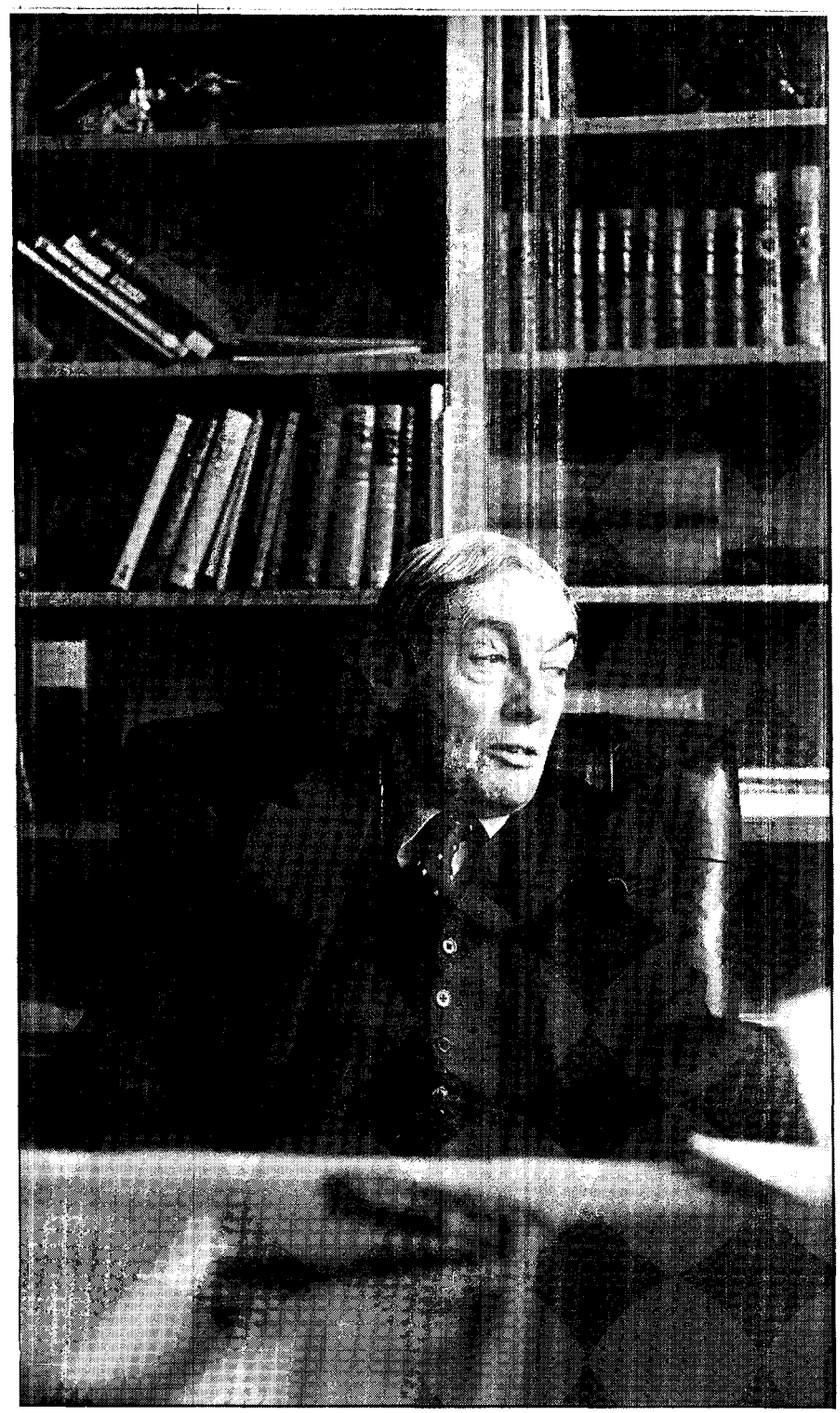
I myself would think that in a British statute we could adopt most of the exceptions in the European convention but draw some of them a bit more tightly. "Public morality" is a widely drawn exception. Certainly "national security" is a wide one, but you've got to have that.

SW: There would be nothing to stop you having your own bill of rights which is stronger than the European convention?

Nothing at all. Ireland and Denmark would say that's what they've got.

The real value of a bill of rights to our society is that it would list and classify and define the fundamental rights and liberties of British citizenship. That is nowhere done in our law. The common-law approach is that anything that is not specifically unlawful is lawful. That is an excellent principle in itself, but it would never prevent, for instance, racial discrimination. It would never prevent discrimination against women. Because if anything is lawful which has not been either enacted or judicially declared to be unlawful, then an employer is going to be able to choose his workforce, discriminating against ethnic minorities, against women, and that, of course, is what they did. And there was nothing unlawful about it. You needed legislation to put that straight. Well we got it specifically in the Race Relations Act and the Equal Opportunities Act.

But you need to back up detailed legislation with a declaration of general principle. The Americans have twigged this. They have a tremendous volume of civil rights legislation in the States. That is not part of the constitution. It is detailed legislation but it has the support of the Bill of Rights in the constitution. I have always thought that the argument, "Oh well, you can get away with detailed legislation and we don't need a statute of general application" is merely consigning human rights to judges nit-picking detailed provisions. What you want is a very powerful general declaration of human rights and liberties.



Mike Abrahams/Network

Lord (Leslie) Scarman, aged 79, is one of Britain's most distinguished former judges. He was the first and most influential chairman of the Law Commission, which proposes law reform, and, in 1977, he was appointed a law lord by the Labour Lord Chancellor, Lord Elwyn Jones.

His career, though, has extended beyond the purely judicial. He has chaired important government inquiries into the troubles in Northern Ireland, Red Lion Square, Grunwick, and Brixton. The Brixton report, in particular, was a radical document that has had a profound influence on the nature of policing, and through it, Lord Scarman demonstrated his concern for the rights of minorities. Despite his incisive intellect he is approachable and unpompous.

His liberalism, though, has not always led to the judgments one might expect: as a law lord, he decided against *Gay News* in its prosecution for blasphemy, for the government over its ban on trade unions at GCHQ, and against the GLC in the "Fares Fair" case.

He has been one of the most prominent and consistent supporters of a bill of rights, which he first argued for in his Hamlyn lectures of 1974. He is on the council of Charter 88, the organisation for constitutional reform.

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AB: Doesn't that bring you to the second objection, which is precisely that British judges can't be trusted? This kind of adjudication of principles will end up by giving power to *judges who are even more reactionary than government.*

Well, of course, I don't accept that. First of all, I don't accept the sort of *carte blanche* attack on the British judiciary, that they are reactionary. I certainly think there is room for broadening the range of selection of judges. You could criticise them by saying that perhaps they lack social awareness and perhaps they lack knowledge as to how the government machinery works, how the administration works. I think that is a fair criticism. I think the judges also need independence, integrity, great learning. And they need forensic experience. Now our judges, by and large, have got those qualities.

I liked Helena Kennedy's article on these matters (*NSS*, 27 July). She says, "we need to create a culture where the protection of rights is central to our law, where people know their rights." That's really what I am saying. A bill of rights is going to be easy to teach children at school. That's what the Americans do. Children in America know all about the Bill of Rights. And again, if you have a bill of rights on the statute book, the government, and its civil service advisers, will be legislating with their eye cocked on what is in it to make sure that they don't fall foul of it.

Jolyon Jenkins: They already need to worry about the European Convention, don't they?

Yes. In government departments, and particularly in those ones where the European Convention is sensitive, for instance, the Home Office, where the civil servants have learned by bitter experience they've got to keep an eye open to the European Convention. We are much better placed on human rights now than we were when I first took up the cause in 1974, just because the convention is now known to exist. But what does one want for the future? One really wants a written constitution and a bill of rights to make sure that these things can't be tampered with easily by a simple majority in a single house of parliament.

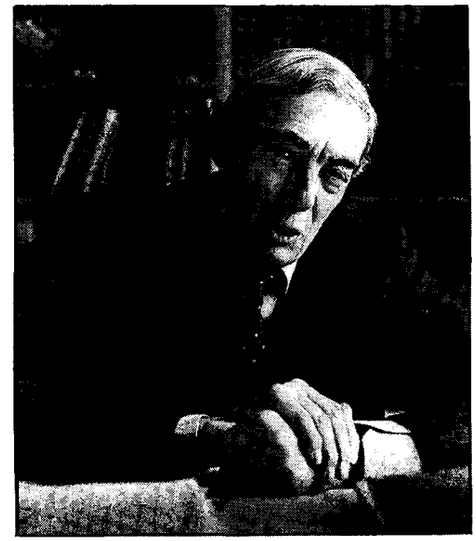
JJ: So do you actually think we have more rights than we did in 1974?

We've got more rights. The Race Relations Acts and Equal Opportunities Act were major advances. But you see, we are trying to develop a society in which the individual cannot be oppressed by abuse of power—abuse of power by central government or local government. Now, at the moment, it is extremely difficult for an ordinary citizen to win a case of judicial review of an act of local or central government, unless he can point to a specific statute or statutory instrument, and say the public authority has not complied with the requirements in the statute. This is a very technical argument. He may or may not succeed. Introduce into this field a bill of rights, and you immediately have a code which, if it is well drafted, makes the protection of rights, in Helena Kennedy's words, "central to our law". It becomes part of the ethos of society. The only way way you'll get to that position is if you have a modern, 20th-century Magna Carta.

The judges will interpret it—they've been interpreting statutes since time immemorial, they'll go on interpreting statutes as long as there is a civilised world—so it is no good complaining about judges. You could say that we've got the wrong judges and ought to get better ones. That is a fair argument. But just to say judge power is wrong is a piece of ridiculous nonsense. Judge power is necessary.

JJ: Alistair Darling, the Labour Party's home affairs spokesperson, says that it is wrong *in principle* for judges to decide whether people have rights (*NSS*, 20 July). He says it should be in the hands of legislature.

Little do they know. To an English lawyer, that is nonsense. Most of our rights are common-law rights. The freedom of speech is a common-law right, the right to walk unimpeded down the highway is a common-law right. The law of trespass is common law, murder is a common-law offence. Rape, although it is now a statutory offence, is also a common-law offence. Who first of all declared the common law? Not the parliament, not the king, but the judges. For hundreds of years, the view has been expressed politically that the common law is so good we don't need parliament to interfere.



The real value of a bill of rights to our society is that it would list and classify and define the fundamental rights and liberties of British citizenship

What I am saying is: now let parliament have a say as to what the law of fundamental rights is going to be. Let them satisfy themselves that they have got a bill of rights, as the Americans did in 1791. Let them satisfy themselves that they have got the bill of rights they want. What does the judge then do? He can't go inventing. He is bound by the statute and he is bound to interpret it. And therefore tell me the judges need broader experience and better education; although I don't wholly agree, I follow the point. But tell me we should do without judicial power and I say you are talking nonsense.

SW: Isn't there perhaps a danger even in the idea that politicians in parliament alone ought to decide? Especially under a constitution like ours which makes the executive so powerful?

Well, exactly. That's a very pregnant observation, Stuart. Parliament is not the independent legislative body that you might like to think it is. Parliament at the moment is controlled from the House of Commons. But then when you look at the Commons, you find that parliament is dominated by the political party that can command the majority in the House and so form a government. And that means that for most of the time, the executive controls parliament.

AB: Why do you think that both Conservative and Labour governments are hostile to the idea of a bill of rights?

Because it is seen as a curb on the power of parliament, a restraint on the legislative power and on the executive

Lord Scarman was interviewed by Stuart Weir, editor of the *NSS*, Anthony Barnett, coordinator of Charter 88, and Jolyon Jenkins, assistant editor of the *NSS*.

This interview is part of a continuing *NSS* debate on a bill of rights. Earlier contributions include a discussion with Alistair Darling (Labour's home affairs spokesperson) and Conor Gearty (co-author of *Freedom Under Thatcher*), which was published 20 July 1990, and an article by barrister Helena Kennedy, published 27 July 1990.

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power of government. Parliament and the Prime Minister see a bill of rights as really a blueprint for the protection of human rights in general terms and they see that really as an unnecessary restriction on their legislative activity. Let me explain what I mean. Constitutionally, of course, parliament is sovereign and a bill of rights passed into law this year would in no way inhibit the rights of future parliaments to amend or repeal it. But when you get great powerful statutes passed, they don't get easily repealed. Look at the survival rate of Magna Carta. Look at the way that *habeas corpus* acts have survived. Now politicians do not wish themselves to be circumscribed in that way. They say: "We have a problem on freedom of information, let us have a specific statute on freedom of information that does the job. We had a problem recently on official secrets. Let's do that." Then you see what they legislated.

SW: You spoke very approvingly of the Indian Bill of Rights because it contains economic and social rights. Are you in favour of that for this country?

I myself would like it. The way the Indians do it is clever. They realise that social and economic rights depend upon the provision of money—if the money is not there, the rights are not going to be available. It doesn't matter if it's health, or education, or indeed income support. The money has got to be there. And so the Indian constitution has done it in this way. First of all, it has a part dealing with traditional human rights and fundamental freedoms and these are directly enforceable in their courts. Then it has a part which sets out the social and economic rights that are, so to speak, to be the birthrights of the Indian people—education, health care, provision against need and so forth. And what they say, in effect, is that these rights will have to be provided for by specific legislation because they involve provision of money. But all institutions of government—executive, legislative and judicial—are to bear in mind that these rights, though not enforceable in the courts, are to be respected. And in that way they've really bound future parliaments.

SW: Just recently the Institute of Economic Affairs has published a pamphlet more or less arguing that the pressure of Europe upon the British constitution makes a bill of rights essential. The authors want to make our constitution robust enough to make it safe in Europe.

I would agree with that. And, of course, a bill of rights is really necessary in Northern Ireland, and the people there say so. They used to say that they would wait until the United Kingdom as a whole had a bill of rights, but I think they are changing their view of that. They want it now.

SW: After some 15 years of publicly arguing the case for a bill of rights, do you think it will come shortly and, if so, why?

I put it in a personal way. I think I have every chance of living long enough to see a bill of rights enacted. I do not expect to live long enough to see a written constitution enacted, although I would love to see it. The British people have been awakened to the numerous cases in which citizens denied redress in one matter or another in this country have been able to go to Strasbourg, and get the European Court to declare that their human rights have been infringed. The court has done a wonderful educational job. People are now alert, and that being so, I think one or other of the major political parties will relent. I suspect it will be the Labour Party, although I haven't given up hope of the Conservative Party. There are a lot of Conservatives, actually, who would like a bill of rights.

I think the Labour Party is close to relenting, because it knows now that the electorate understands what human rights are. When I began to talk about it publicly, in my Hamlyn lectures in 1974, it meant nothing to people. People unthinkingly assumed that ours was the best legal system in the world, ours was the freest country in the world, and we were the most tolerant people in the world. Well, we now know that ours isn't the most free country and we aren't the most tolerant people. Britain may still be one of the better countries in which to live, but we could make it better. ●

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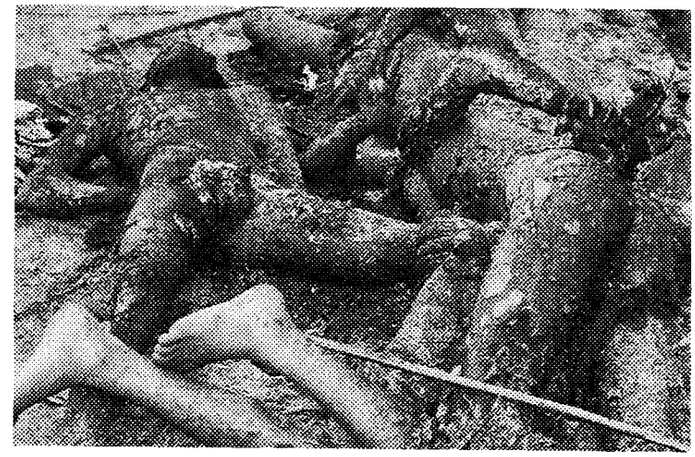

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The North

Are we just

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South divide.

y accused?

Only a nation united can in fairness scorn a nation divided, but that begs the question who's united?

LA STAMPA

Why do the affluent citizens of Milan refer to their poorer countrymen from South of Rome as 'Africans'?

Le Monde

What do the Parisian gentry think of the peasants of Provence?

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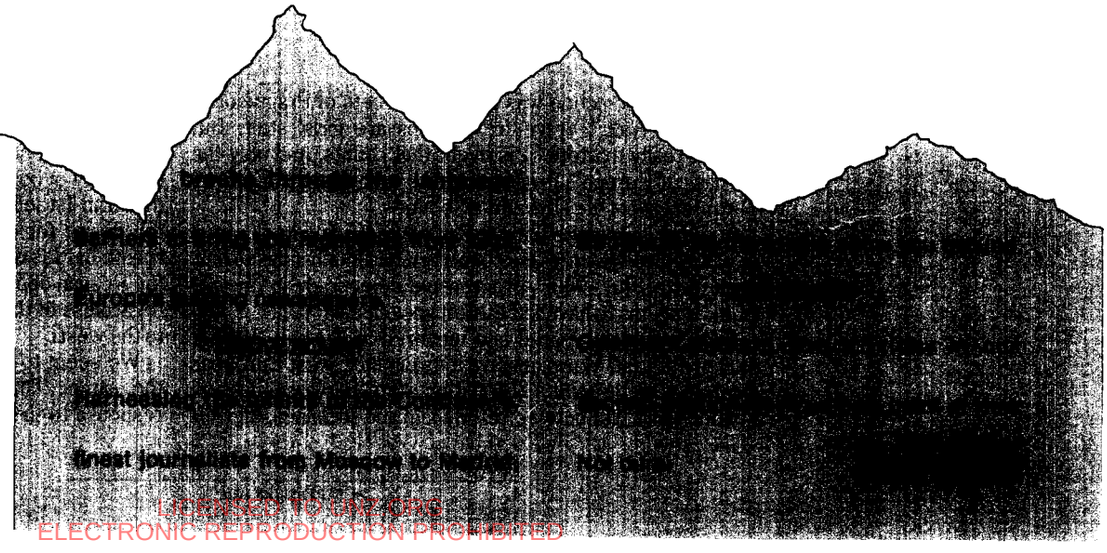

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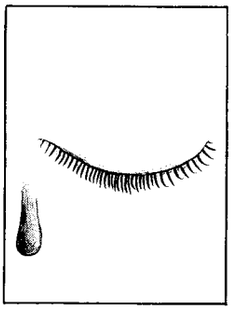
Oracles of society

Is the point no longer to change the world, but only to interpret it? Sarah Benton on a lost left



This is the fourth article in our series on the future of socialism. Previous articles were Eric Hobsbawm on utopias and Anthony Wright on the new Labour Party (14 September); and Hans Magnus Enzensberger on utopias in Europe (21 September). Next, Paul Hirst on radical democracy.

Before 1 August it was still possible to talk about the state of the world without looking any further than our back yard—Europe. As that seemed to enfold every possibility, it was sufficient. Although the European Age had been declared definitively dead by the global dominance of the US, USSR and Japan, European people had woken their culture from a coma and brought it into dazzling, mesmerising life. What matter if the British were only onlookers to this show? Hastily wrapping our new European cloaks around us, we were at least entitled to be there, waiting for our chance to join in.

This was not just British, or even European, belief. It fitted a growing American belief that the great American Age was over too, economically exhausted by military expenditure, its whole destiny horribly perverted by the cold war. The Japanese, meanwhile, kept mum, watching European developments nervously for, as foreign minister Taro Nakayama said, "a situation in which such movements would lead to the formation of closed regional blocks". Japan's heavy investments in South East Asia and purposeful participation in such regional conferences as the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum remain unexplored by most of the British media. Japan, Iraq, Cambodia are—were—beyond Europe's pale.

On 2 August, the cloud we were walking on burst. After the Gulf, one correspondent wrote in the *New York Times*: "The obituaries were a bit premature. There is still one superpower in the world, and it is the United States... Washington is not the backwater that it seemed to some when the action was all in the streets of Prague or at the Berlin Wall." Velvet revolutions are girls' stuff. But when it really matters, it is might that counts, and only the US has it. "Europe", in all its variety, is enclosed in Europe. The interests of the US know no bounds.

Our most powerful movements are history-made—whether that means poll-tax protestors dressed up as Wat Tyler or East Germans rediscovering anti-Semitism

So now, just as the Labour Party was hauling itself out of the 1930s (socialism in one country) it has found it has to haul itself out of the 1960s (progressive democracy in one region). It seems to have left the left speechless.

Socialism was created and nurtured in Europe. Labour movements and Marxism gave it its distinct, west European form of a battle *within* the nation state between classes. Politics was a war between capitalism and socialism, and it is through this frame that the left judged conflicts around the world. It was, in Britain, a peculiarly economic frame. As new voices chimed in—the religious versus the secular, modernism versus traditional forms, imperialism versus the third world—the post-Marxist left has found it increasingly hard to work out which side it is on. Nothing marked the gulf between Nelson Mandela and Europe's fragmented modernism so much as his belief that the IRA was a popular force for national liberation fighting a classic anti-colonial war. Fifteen years ago, many on the British left might have supported that interpretation. Not today. Northern Ireland is only one of a myriad of conflicts and issues about which the left has nothing distinctive to say.

The heart-grabbing movement to "do something" about famine in Africa was initiated and sustained by TV crews, pop stars and audiences they had created through the communications technology. Even our own, home-grown Anti-Apartheid failed to develop the sort of mass following which anti-apartheid groups in the US gained in the mid-1980s. No British black politician of note used his commitment to ending apartheid in the way that, say, Jesse Jackson was able to do. As for the dissident students of Iraq who have circulated petitions against Saddam Hussein over the past few years—has the left got a significantly better record in opposing Saddam's repression than our government? We sneer at Mrs Thatcher's sudden "revolted" discovery that she has been nurturing a despot in her bosom. The voices from the British left that spoke for Iraqi civil liberties were scarcely more strident. The only solidarity campaign that picked up significant support in Britain in the past five years was for Nicaragua. Why Nicaragua? Because of the US.

Yet, still, we live in a new era. If the Bush doctrine is to become that the US truly knows no bounds—Europe, the North Atlantic, the Middle East, the Pacific, Latin America—that in a regional era it belongs in every region, then that is a road to destruction. It is unsustainable.

In this new world without frontiers, we don't know what to think about any of its boundless problems. The left has no common view on pornography, on what we understand by sexual liberation, whether or not we even think sex is that important any more; on children, in whose name so many adult anxieties are played out; on Islam and "multiculturalism"; on trade unions and childcare.

It certainly has no common view on the Middle East. Has the policy of our western governments been determined by the Arab-Israeli conflict as Palestinian supporters argue? By the desire for cheap oil, as Israelis suspect? By the surrogate battles of the cold war, the orthodox left view? Or by the Reagan doctrine of supporting nations friendly to the US regardless of the type of regime or its economic usefulness to the west?

We seem to think each of these interpretations is really the same. That's a failure to think, and our uncertain response to the Gulf task force shows this is so. As critics,

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we note that the world's "evil men"—Iran's Shah, the Philippines's Marcos, Argentina's Galtieri, Panama's Noriega, Iraq's Saddam Hussein—are, until the moment of their unmasking, our government's truest friends. There is something here for cultural interpreters. But is that enough?

We, children of Freud and Jung and cultural deconstruction, have lost the art of material analysis in our preoccupation with signs and myths.

There are good reasons for this: as our own political actors have increasingly renounced, or lost, the role of directing economic and material forces, they increasingly move in the realm of the symbolic. We have to interpret these symbolic actions. And information technology re-casts the role of intellectuals as the decoders of the new information that oozes from all sides into our homes. Thus, we try to gauge the meaning of political forces we know only through the media by noting their metaphors of language and action.

Mythological interpretations are essential. But on their own, they push the left into the role of shaman: interpreter of the arcane and obscure. We can be the oracles of the society being created around us, not the Citizen Kings making it ourselves.

For is the point no longer to change the world, but only to interpret it? No blueprint for change, no inspiring vision of how things could be, ever sprung from the mind of a philosopher hunched over television screen or statistical books. The vision of what we want, or what we could have, comes from actually wrestling with what is. Or rather, where popular movements succeed in changing things for the better, they combine wrestling with what is with organisational skills and with political strategy and vision. Once, that was lesson one for radicals. Somewhere along the line, that knowledge has been lost. Somewhere in the flight from rigid Marxism and labourism and ultra-left posturing and rent-a-mob pickets, the intellectuals of the left in western Europe and the US have become fatally separated from those on whose behalf they once spoke. Europeanisation threatens to increase the gap.

We have not, after all, had to take responsibility for anything in Britain since 1979. Even if some of us sit on local councils, wrestling with budgets and educational cuts, we do not feel responsible for the shortfall. We have our own mythology, in which Thatcherism extends its malign grip and freezes us into impotence. We do not have to think, how would *we* run the National Health Service; how would we decide between hip operations and community care and miracle babies? We make excellent speeches about underfunding in education. How would we actually convert sink schools into progressive but purposeful educational institutions? We don't know. We haven't had to think about it. We are not just oracles of the arcane; we have the innocent wisdom of children, infantilised by years without power.

Of course, lots of individuals of the progressive/democratic/radical/socialist forces have exercised power as teachers and hospital administrators, as council leaders and political advisers. But those individuals have had to function outwith a progressive culture of how their power should be exercised and to what purpose.

What does the left now want? Yes, yes, we know it wants freedom, democracy, justice, fairness. Does it want the elimination of poverty? to close the earnings gap? to abolish capitalism? If not, what does it want to do about the manifest inequalities and write-offs capitalism spawns? It's not just the details of the programme. The purpose of the whole programme lies unsettled. And as for foreign policy—questions of defence, of Nato, of nuclear bombs, of the third world, of free trade or protectionism, of multinationals—what are the guiding principles?

The end of the cold war and the crumbling of communist parties, not just in membership but in intellectual and moral esteem, has given the left both new hope and life, and destroyed much of its life. It risks severing its connection to the past, and that is fatal.

Jacek Depczyk

Velvet revolutions are girls' stuff. When it matters, it's might that counts, and only the US has it and US interests know no bounds

Our most powerful movements are history-made, whether that means poll-tax protestors dressing up as Wat Tyler; Scots using the historic language of Covenants and the Claim of Rights; or East Germans rediscovering anti-Semitism. The history may be good or bad, specious or authentic. But it is by far the richest and most powerful source of our ideas for the future. A British, or even English, left in quest of its future will not do it by junking its past as a restrictive anachronism. For the most serious danger is that Europhilia will cause British political leaders to junk their fellow-citizens, to—in the language of the old/new Europe—abandon them, so they feel betrayed. Then the left will truly have failed to read the signs. ●

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LETTERS

Community spirit

I was interested to read Anthony Wright's article on community ("Out of vision", 14 September).

This is not the first time that contributors have written about "communitarianism", and have caught my attention. On a previous occasion, I actually tried to follow up with the academic concerned some of the interesting thoughts that she had written about. I'm afraid I met with little success.

While academics and "intellectuals" bemoan the lack of respect on the left of British politics, some of us despair at their detachment, or seriousness of intent.

While some people were thinking about it, many of us were practising a commitment to "community", as well "as stomping the country", promoting a non-zany "bottom-up approach" to the political future. The Fabian pamphlet *Building from the Bottom* (1983) and *Democracy in Crisis* (Hogarth Press, 1987), may not have the intellectual rigour provided by those with time on their hands, but they did address these very issues.

I do not believe that "community" is a particularly big idea. I do, however, believe it is a crucial one, both as a positive vehicle for involvement and participation in democracy, and as a counterweight to the transnational power of corporate business in the 1990s.

David Blunkett MP
House of Commons
London SW1

Western hypocrisy

If, as seems increasingly likely, war breaks out in the Gulf against a well-armed Iraq, the resulting loss of life will cut an appalling swathe through hundreds of thousands of ordinary Iraqis and migrant workers from Asia and Europe, and the violence may well spill over into surrounding countries, with incalculable consequences.

Discussion of this horrifying prospect is increasingly turning away from the central issue, the alleged justifications for ousting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, towards questions of when and how military action might come. We even have the obscenity of arguing the toss over which contingents of the British armed forces have the best chance of securing for Mrs Thatcher the

equivalent of the political spoils of the Falklands campaign. It is urgently necessary to reconsider the case against Saddam Hussein.

1. Kuwait was a sovereign state that suffered invasion by a foreign power. So were Panama and the Lebanon and Cyprus, but the international community has managed to accept invasions by the US, Israel and Turkey without going to war, or even imposing sanctions. Why not accept an invasion by Iraq?

2. Iraq has stolen Kuwaiti assets. Kuwait was carved out of Arabia by Britain for its own convenience and profit, and a "reliable" (and highly autocratic) client regime installed to supply oil to the west; Iraq has now swallowed this artificial creation for its convenience and profit. There is no scope here for Britain and the US—which have plundered the assets of every continent on the face of the globe—to claim the moral high ground.

3. Iraq threatens the stability of oil supplies. Iraq needs money to rebuild after its gruelling war with Iran. The one certainty is that, left alone, Iraq will pump and sell Kuwaiti oil as if there were no tomorrow.

4. Iraq's build-up of nuclear weapons and rockets is a threat to peace. So is Israel's, and it acquired them first. So are British, French, Chinese, Soviet and American nuclear weapons. What is so special about nuclear weapons in Saddam's hands that justifies going to war? If Israel fears a nuclearised Iraq, let it negotiate an end to the running sore of its oppression of the Palestinians, and bilateral disarmament.

5. Saddam Hussein is a ruthless dictator who tortures and murders political opponents and ethnic minorities. General Pinochet and Pol Pot were, likewise, torturers and murderers, whom US presidents helped to install or support. How many countries in the world actually have a good record of upholding democratic liberties, minority rights and the rule of law? Is the Iraqi regime significantly worse in these respects than a depressingly long list of other countries, ranging from South Africa, Honduras and Turkey to Indonesia and Sri Lanka? Did Saddam invent the death squad, poison gas and the concentration camp?

We would not be contemplating war if Iraq were in Europe, and any fighting endangered the whole population of "civilised" Europe rather than the Arabs and their neighbours. This whole affair reeks of hypocrisy, political opportunism, racism, double standards and the short-term self-interest of wealthy nations. It must be stopped.

Michael McCarthy
Hurst Close
Bromley

Caring for Carmen

Sarah Baxter ("The Carmen touch", 21 September) would have me believe I am a phenomenon.

Just for the record, I have worked in a senior editorial position for Carmen Callil for close on five and a half years. I like my job. I am not frightened of Carmen. I am not interested in her domestic life, nor do I expect her to be interested in mine—though she is undoubtedly considerate of it.

Perhaps this will suggest to your readers that there is another side to the picture painted by your article.

Alison Samuel
Chatto & Windus
Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1

Having been Carmen Callil's personal assistant for two years, I would venture to suggest that Ms Baxter's account of "the revolving door of Carmen's secretaries" is a little out of date. My assistant Kate Fitch, of 15 months' employ, agrees.

By the time of your next issue I shall, no doubt, still be in my usual position at Chatto & Windus quietly getting on with my job and definitely not, as Ms Baxter would have you believe, rigid with fear.

I certainly would have left by now had that been the situation—we're not the long- (or short-) suffering fools she takes us for.

Rowena Skelton-Wallace
personal assistant to Carmen Callil

Left but not lost

Eric Hobsbawm's gloomy account of the state of the left has some force ("Lost horizons", 14 September). It's true that parts of the left are doing badly: in the past year, communist parties across Europe, from Bulgaria to Britain, have shed large parts of their membership and the name "Communist". (Time will tell which of these losses is the more significant.) However, we should not exaggerate either the extent of the damage or its inevitability.

But parts of the left are very far from being demoralised. For many of us, the Leninist experiment failed long ago—some time between 1921 and 1956, to be precise.

Socialism for us means both social justice and political democracy: both the common ownership of the means of production and distribution, and the democratic structures necessary to make that a reality and not a statist fiction. The socialism of the October Revolution had very little to say about the green issues with which Hobsbawm is rightly concerned, or about the nationalisms which he wrongly dismisses: we have tried to rectify this. We have also done what we can to take on feminist concerns, to locate Britain in a European political context, to say a few words about the British electoral system...

Our socialism, in other words, still has a full agenda. Whether or not Hobsbawm is right in stating that "most socialists compete with each other in asserting the rhetoric of the supermarket", to my certain knowledge a sizeable body of socialists assert nothing of the sort. Hobsbawm's warning of the dire consequences "if socialists lose confidence in themselves" thus reads oddly in the light of his own lack of confidence in socialists in general. Of course, the professor may simply have been moving in the wrong circles. Hobsbawm is entitled to lament the state of his own party; he should be more cautious about writing off the rest of the left.

Phil Edwards
The Socialist Society

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Yes, sir

Sean French has got it wrong again ("Diary", 14 September). Neither national service officers in training nor anyone else called a Sergeant "sir". His anecdote should refer to Warrant Officers such as the RSM (Regimental Sergeant-Major) or SMIG (Sergeant-Major Instructor in Gunnery). I believe the original wording was "I 'sir' you, sir, and you 'sir' me, sir but..."

The anecdote may have got corrupted by confusion with Malcolm's reply (in *Macbeth* 1, 2) to the question "What bloody man is that?"

David Bradnack
Thame Road
Aylesbury
Bucks

Apologies

A transcript error altered the sense of a sentence in Anthony Barnett's political column last week. The sentence: "Everybody knows that there's no free speech in Britain," should have begun "Everybody knows there's no right to..."

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● A man who tried to rape a 55-year-old businesswoman was told by an Old Bailey judge yesterday that it might have been better for her if it had been successful.

Judge Anthony Edmondson told James Fry: "It might have been less distressing for her if you had completed the full offence of rape because her ordeal would have been over in in a few minutes, but she had to suffer for a full hour."—*Daily Telegraph* (Richard Olszewski)

● After years of inexplicable delays, London Underground has finally owned up: a Northern Line minute is no less than 84 seconds long.

It seems that LRT's platform indicators, designed to reassure travellers by telling them how long they must wait for the next train, are programed to deceive: "They're not real times," explains a spokesman helpfully. "When the 'three-mins' sign goes up, it's not meant to be taken literally. Some of our minutes on other lines are a bit less than 60 seconds so it cuts both ways."—*Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

FRINGE BENEFITS

Paper people

Colin Ward

Maureen Richardson is one of those people who must always be making something. When I first knew her in the fifties she was into rag-rug making, rush weaving, straw-work and hedgerow basketry: all the gypsy crafts that involved materials ready to hand. She kept her bees in straw hives just like the ones in Bewick's engravings from the 18th century. When the children were off her hands, she attended a short course in papermaking at Camberwell School of Art.

She learned that most amateur papermakers were content to buy slabs of ready-made pulp and produce very beautiful writing paper from them. But this was not what made her want to explore this craft. The author of a recent book on her work explains that Maureen had "a concern for the vast consumption of wood pulp by the paper industry and the excessive demand made on the world's trees. So much cheaply produced paper was used thoughtlessly and so much went to waste."

It was axiomatic for her that paper should be made of local materials that would otherwise go to waste. So she went foraging for plant fibres and by now has accumulated over a hundred useful species and dozens of creative combinations. They can be farm wastes like the straw of rye, flax or maize; tree products like willow; vegetables like scarlet runner beanstalks or onions; flowers like marigold or poppy; or weeds like dandelion, thistle, or giant hogweed. People buy her papers as pictures, and publishers use them as decorative endpapers or for fine bindings. But she *does* also make papers you can write on—somehow I feel too inhibited to type on them.

Just because they get exhibited all over the world, she has been obliged to run summer courses on Plant Papers, demystifying the art of papermaking, at the home-made house her husband Brian built at Brilley in Herefordshire. At other times, he runs two-week building courses at the Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth in Wales.

Obviously they both hope that something more brushes off than the technology of making paper. Visitors notice the turf-covered roofs and the solar panels providing hot water as well as the magnificent view over the Wye Valley with the Black Mountains beyond. The Richardsons cherish the integration of workspace and living space, and when the time came to build a papermaking studio, they flouted all the accepted ideas about building. Brian explains that there are "no foundations, in the sense of ravishing the site by digging holes and filling them back up with messy, expensive concrete; no damp-proof course. Everyone knows you must have this, but our building is off the ground and has the air flowing freely around and under it, so it needs none. No 'wet trades'—concrete, brick or plaster. These are difficult materials to handle; heavy, and requiring strength and special skill to get good results. No roofing tiles. A butyl rubber sheet sheds the water and is prevented from blowing off by a layer of turf sods, which also deaden the sound of rain beating down, and provide a soft sort of handknitted appearance to help the building tuck itself into the rural landscape." Nor are there plastic gutters: the roof tilts to one corner to collect the rain into a storage tank for watering the vegetables. There aren't any paints or timber preservatives either, since "noxious chemicals are wickedly expensive and harmful to humans and bats alike."

I got the feeling that going on a course about making Plant Papers is really a lesson in changing habits and attitudes to life. So I asked Maureen what kind of people went. She told me about one: an "old Africa hand" who had seen in Malawi how schoolchildren had just one exercise book to cover all subjects for a year. She knew there was plenty of paper in the city so, on learning that anyone can make paper if they learn how, she was inspired to take her new knowledge to teachers there, in order that they might teach the children in turn. (Anyone can improvise the equipment from anything.) She reckoned that there were enough serviceable materials around to make a paper capable of taking pen or pencil, and which anyway only had to last a year.

Anyone can launch an appeal for half-used exercise books to be shipped out, like old spectacles or jumble-sale dresses, to central Africa. How much better, thought this student, to export a skill which could last a lifetime with every child who learned it. So I realised that learning to make paper from plant materials isn't confined to wall decorations and lampshades. After all, the Japanese have built paper houses for centuries. It's a skill anyone can acquire using no energy beyond the human kind, and no materials beyond those that the rest of us burn, bury or put in the dustbin.

That's the good news shining out of Herefordshire.

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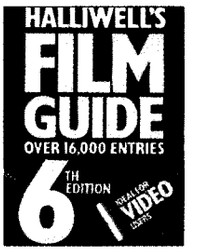
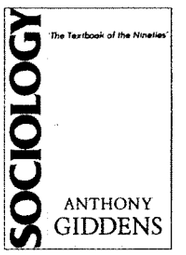
3 

4 

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The art of scandal

Corruption, scandal, the troubled lives of the rich. Stuart Cosgrove unravels Babylon culture

In the universe of trivia that often masquerades as the human mind, one piece of ephemera refuses to go away. Did you know that there is a country-and-western singer who goes by the unlikely name of Kinky Friedman? He claims that his cowboy boots are made from the foreskin of a brontosaurus. It is not a particularly useful piece of knowledge, but it has unduly troubled me for the past two months. If his boots are made of prehistoric penis, what are his slippers made from?

The story of the brontosaurus boots is gleaned from the pages of Randall Reise's indispensable book *Nashville Babylon*, a scurrilous history of country music seen through the eyes of an enthusiast-turned-cynic. In an era in which scandal has such an inflated currency, it is not surprising that writing books with the subtitle "Babylon" is one of the biggest growth industries in publishing.

Obviously, the most significant statement on the role of scandal within the modern media was Kenneth Anger's infamous *Hollywood Babylon*, a book of such remarkable audacity that it implicated Fatty Arbuckle in a sordid rape and left the image of James Dean tangled in the wreckage of his secret sexuality.

Hollywood was used to scandal and acclimatised to probing gossip columnists like Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons, but Anger's book traumatised the film industry by breaking the codes of respectability, severing the links between manufactured gossip and the film industry's publicity machine, and ransacking the lives of the rich and famous for wickedness, weakness and downright filth.

Despite its cult status, *Hollywood Babylon* remains a deeply troubling book; an exposé that tramples on morality but is premised on an authorial voice that is mocking, vindictive and sometimes wrong. Anger looks back with creative venom and dismantles the tarnished scaffolding of stardom. Without ever setting out to do so, *Hollywood Babylon* established a literary sub-genre that is enjoying unprecedented success. There are currently about 20 different books using the "Babylon" title; all of them acknowledge a deeply ingrained fascination with scandal and corruption.

Jeff Rovin's *TV Babylon* takes a scalpel to the

Beverly Levy

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lives of prime-time American TV stars and exposes their egotism and excesses. In a section called "Stoned in Babylon", he dismisses Dick Van Dyke as an inveterate boozer, exposes David Soul as a wife-beater, and describes Erik Estrada of the motorcycle cop-show *Chips* as a "TV bastard" who forced his co-stars to wear unflattering clothes to heighten his sense of glamour and feed his narcissism.

The growth in the "Babylon" industry can be indirectly related to the phenomenal popularity of tabloid publications like the US's *National Enquirer* and British newspapers like the *Sun* and the *Sunday Sport*. But the comparisons are by no means simple. The demographic profile of the typical Kenneth Anger *aficionado* differs fundamentally from regular readers of the salacious tabloid press. Although they may share a mutual interest in scandal, they are motivated by different attitudes and by quite separate ideologies of salaciousness.

The typical reader of *National Enquirer* is likely to be from a small-town experience and a comparatively low socio-economic background. A "Babylon" enthusiast is generally metropolitan, "sophisticated", and economically more privileged. The first group finds unhindered pleasure in scandal, enjoying secret glimpses into the tragic lives of the stars. The second group is predictably more confused in its moral relationship to scandal, rejecting the intrusive extremes of tabloid journalism and resenting its disregard for privacy and personal grief, while indulging in the more artistically decorative approach of Kenneth Anger and his followers. In the eyes of his apologists, Anger elevates scandal to an art form.

Ransacking the lives of the rich and famous for wickedness, weakness and downright filth

It is Anger's writing style that most noticeably separates his vision of scandal from the more prosaic approach of the tabloid press. They share a spirit of lurid sensationalism, but Anger's style is deliberately ornate and uses camp and voyeuristic metaphors to lure the reader into a bedroom of bitterness and excess.

His analysis of Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* in *Hampden Babylon II* is ripe with overstatement, teasing the reader with the psychoanalytic proposal that William Randolph Hearst's semi-erect penis and Marion Davies's clitoris are keys to understanding the film. Dismissing the film as *cinema-cunnilingus*, Anger pursues the salacious theory that "Rosebud" was Hearst's nickname for Marion's "love-bump" and that one of the masterpieces of cinema was simply pussy-footing with the intimate parts of stardom.

Beyond sex, the Babylon tradition has a morbid interest in death and decomposition. In almost every book there is a section on undignified death in which car crashes, suicides, drug overdoses, murder and freak accidents become creative corpses in the pathology of disrepute.

Anger's original book exhumed the bodies of Marilyn Monroe, Jayne Mansfield and a hundred Hollywood stiffs, then probed around the coffins of Santa Monica for any unnatural sign of decadence and disgrace. This fascination with death speaks volumes about the Babylon tradition. The best books take liberties with the law and flirt with libel and defamation of character, but because the law says you can't defame the dead, there is a sinister safety in grave-robbing and always a deliberate hint of hypocrisy on the part of the author.

The Babylon tradition has recently digressed from film, television and the media to turn its scurrilous attention to politics. By far the most important book on political scandal is *Washington Babylon*, an American paperback by Shelley Ross, which Bob Geldof has described as "the world's sexiest history book".

Washington Babylon hijacks Kenneth Anger's inquisitorial style for political purposes. Although Ross never attempts to match Anger's linguistic audacity, she introduces an intellectual dimension to scandal, which the master of Babylon only hints at. Her concern is corruption and the way that scandal can dislodge politicians by pitting their private behaviour against their public pronouncements.

The book begins in 1702 with the bewildering Lord Cornbury, governor of New York, presiding over the state assembly in drag. It takes detailed delight in recounting the infidelity of Thomas Jefferson, who seduced his wife's best friend Betsey Walker, then speculates on Kennedy's notorious love affair with the girlfriend of a Mafia boss, before destroying Nixon's credibility at Watergate.

In an era where the public credibility of politicians hinges as much on their character and personal integrity as their political and ideological dexterity, *Washington Babylon* takes scandal into the realm of public accountability.

Washington Babylon defines scandal as "a moral stumbling, or any action or incident, that, if exposed to the public, will discredit the politician involved". It is not a definition that is unanimously accepted by other Babylon books. Although they all exist in order to expose, many of the books—including Anger's *Hollywood Babylon*—believe the world they inhabit is already corrupt and discredited.

The Babylon tradition normally indulges in the seamy side of popular culture, concentrating on anti-heroic figures like Judy Garland, Montgomery Clift and John Belushi, whose lives are played out according to a decadent, tragic but vicariously thrilling script. If politicians fall from grace, film stars are by their nature original sinners, who have chosen fame and the godhead of Mammon rather than the "benevolence" of public office.

Meanwhile, back in Nashville, the boots are still heaving like a prehistoric penis. In June 1961, Patsy Kline was involved in a head-on collision that killed a young woman. As the singer lay in a Nashville hospital in a critical condition, her song "I Fall To Pieces" raced up the country charts. Babylon thrives on coincidence and the blind corners of bad luck. In the words of La Rochefoucauld, "we all have the strength to endure the misfortune of others."

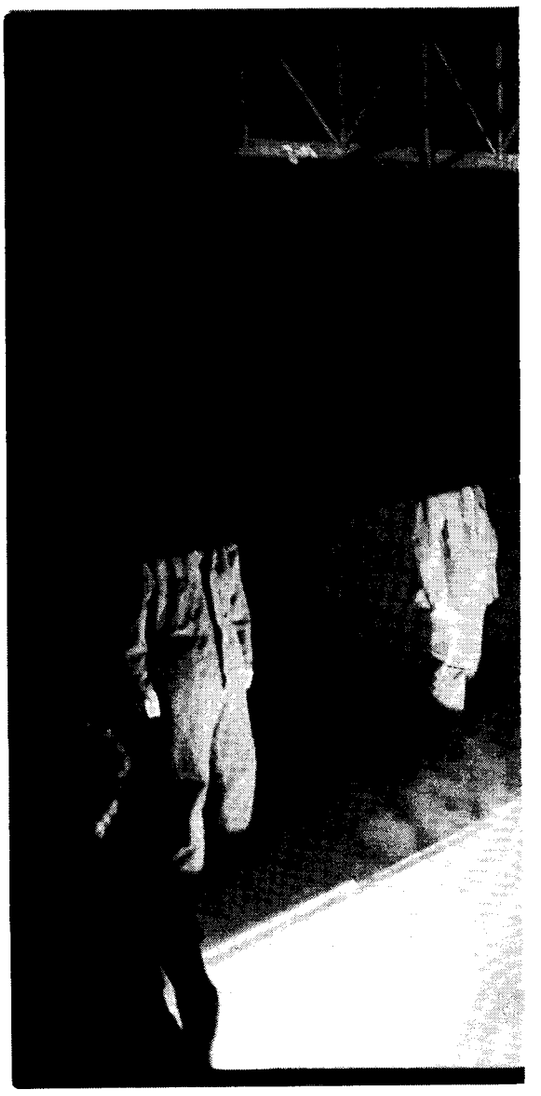
Theatre

Glasgow: all at sea

Stewart Hennessey on rose-tinted views of life

I eagerly anticipate, in my old age, a chance to sit in the midst of a magnificent reconstruction of the Maryhill DHSS and feast upon the "stunning" production of "Giro Days"; an eerily life-like evocation of those unending, halcyon summers. "All laughter and play, no boring old nine-to-five, God we were happy," I'll waffle banally in the minibus back to the rest home.

Meanwhile back to a present-day crucifixion of the truth, namely **The Ship**, written and directed by Bill Bryden. Epic seems too small a word for this play; titanic Brobdingnagian springs to mind. In Govan's cavernous Harland & Wolff engine shed, the Clyde shipyard cul-



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ture—indeed, a shipyard—of the late fifties is exactingly recreated, in much the same way as Victorian workhouses were in *Oliver!*

Proceedings commence with a folksy flatcap band bleating a defiant anthem. This heralds the arrival of the proud, indomitable workers. Heads held high, in orderly file, in they stride; no rabble this, for we are in the land of pride and passion, not grime and drudgery. But lest you think it is a nostalgia trip, the opening dialogue aims a cleverly concealed pre-emptive strike at critics: "Nostalgia is shite." Well, you wrote it Bill, and if this isn't nostalgia then Val Doonican's an important polemicist.

Rose-tinted snapshots and syrupy vignettes of community and working life fill the next 150 minutes, climaxing with the "launch" of the ship. A people abandoned as their creation leaves the industrial womb to brave the seas; poetic, majestic, or at least it might have been had the play been at all engaging. As it is, a hulking, unpanelled frame, encompassing the theatre space, slides 100 yards along the floor, provoking thought of that phenomenal £900,000 budget and a distinctly sinking feeling.

This play is of less interest, however, than the assumptions that underlie it: the working class, by definition, occupy the moral high ground and once lived in blissful communities before the hand of "progress" crushed them. This is not dewy-eyed romanticisation. This is pure, unadulterated tripe. It is also politically defeatist. The atmosphere at such events is one of lament; fostering a sweet but insincere yearning for an impossible return to glorious days which never were. It leaves no scope for hope, the cornerstone of idealism.

The makers are tickled pink by the fact that they have real, live, genuine welders in *The Ship*. Well, shiver me timbers, is this a zoo or a play? If such people are really so fascinating to the thespian community, why are they not all out drinking in Govan pubs every night instead of west end wine bars? Interestingly, in the play, the pub scenes contained no sexist or homophobic remarks. Let's face it, the average labourer is obliged to devote a minimum of 60 per cent of his conversation to the female anatomy, if only for reasons of rites of passage.

What is behind this tradition of vacuous elegies to a precious culture that never existed? This century it really got off the ground in the thirties, through an unholy alliance of romanticism and logic; disillusioned and with nothing else to do with the summer hols, W H Auden and fellow Oxbridge brats, wanting to rebel against all that mumsy and dadsy stood for, took it upon themselves to invest a lot of faith in "men who worked for a wage, rather than a profit". Conveniently they didn't really know very many people who worked for a wage, so they could fantasise freely. That was romance, and this was their quantum leap of logic: since wage earners do not exploit their fellow men, they must be devoid of the impulse to do so. This patronising simplification, suggesting that members of the working class do not have the imagination to desire a better life, is reassuring for everyone since it nullifies the biggest threat to the status quo; discontent.

Vaguely astonishing and clearly laughable, this assertion—and it lies at the core of Bryden's play—is witness to how truly uninterested in the working class this mentality is. But before the Kelmanites chorus, "Middle-Class Conspiracy!", let us not forget working-class collusion. The false flattery and heroic depictions are gratefully received as a justification, even reward, for a meagre, impoverished existence; righteousness seems to be in direct proportion to lowliness of circumstances.

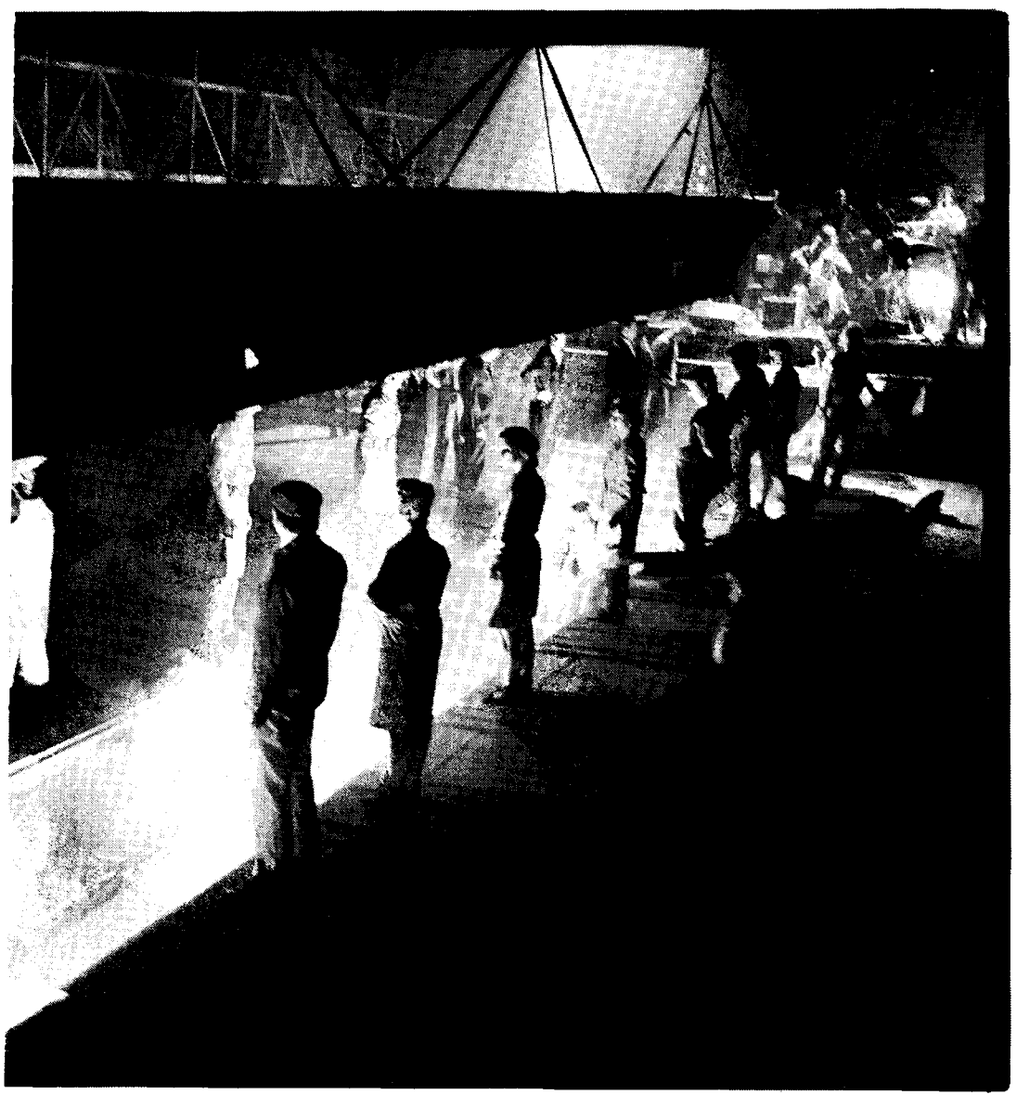
It is rather sad and more than a little depressing that this regressive lie—which Orwell rubbished more than 50 years ago—should permeate the biggest theatrical showpiece in Glasgow's European City of Culture celebrations. Can an unease with the past be detected here? It may not be pleasant, but the truth is that it was all for nothing: all the sweat, grime, poverty, premature deaths and general deprivation served only to ensure that shipping magnates and merchants maintained their wealth. That simple, that dull, and nothing to do with basking in the warm glow of cosy communities, they never existed. Places like Govan were actually dreary and violent, a predictable consequence of the stress and frustration which was the birthright of the inhabitants.

The working class, by definition, occupy the moral high ground and once lived in blissful communities

This mythologising is to do with a conflict that lurks in the Glaswegian psyche, and has surfaced in the reflective atmosphere of 1990, indicating an inability to progress. It is, in fact, romantic myths versus dull reality. The former is more popular, and that does not say much for Glaswegians. Nor does it offer the appropriate regret for abused lives. It is ironic that self-appointed intellectuals wallow in this fantasy, when a pop-singer can sum it up in a few bars.

"It's all we're skilled in/We will be shipbuilding/...Diving for dear life/When we could be diving for pearls." (Elvis Costello, 1982)

Failure to progress: romantic myths versus dull reality in Bill Bryden's "The Ship"



The Ship *plays at The Ship, Harland & Wolff, Clyde Brae Street, Govan Road, Glasgow, until 27 October.*

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Film

Electric shocks

Suzanne Moore on dark humour and the madness myth

When Jane Campion walked into a press conference at the Venice Film Festival, the assembled mob of journalists rose to their feet and cheered this young director from New Zealand. Her latest film, *An Angel At My Table*, swept up eight prizes at Venice and has just won the Critics Award at Toronto. This is vindication, if any were needed, that Campion, director of last year's *Sweetie*, is more than just another offbeat and arty film-maker.

Sweetie, a disturbed and disturbing film, is certainly a hard act to follow. While some welcomed Campion's quirky framing and dark humour, others dismissed it as mere film-school posing, thus writing off the content of the film alongside the style. And though, as Campion says herself, *An Angel At My Table* is a "gentler, kinder—a humanist piece", it shares many of the preoccupations of *Sweetie*.

Made in three parts for television, it is based on the autobiographies of New Zealand writer Janet Frame—*To the Is-Land, An Angel At My Table* and *The Envoy From Mirror City*. Despite her many literary awards, Frame is still known as New Zealand's "mad writer", her work inspired by her experience of insanity. What Frame did in her autobiographies, and what Campion does in the film, is to take apart piece by piece her supposed schizophrenia, to separate the myth from the madness, and to release Janet from her own legend.

Breathtaking performance: Kerry Fox as Janet in "An Angel At My Table"

Starting out as a fat, frizzy-haired little girl, the world of Janet's childhood is already dominated by the power of storytelling—lies, fairy-tales and secrets. Campion still frames each shot with a powerful precision but uses it to evoke the perfect *seriousness* of childhood. When Janet's sister drowns, she retreats further into her world of poetry and the pain of adolescence. At university, these feelings of shyness and inadequacy come to a head. She bungles a suicide and ends up in a mental hospital. Already she is an "interesting case". When she makes a desperate attempt to get help because of her rotting teeth, she is viewed only as a potential genius. It is as though those around her would prefer her pain to be the spiritual misery of a writer rather than the real agony of toothache. This is the familiar "madness as the price of creativity" scenario.

In hospital she undergoes systematic torture in the form of 200 shock treatments over eight years, "each one equivalent in fear to an execution". There were no drugs to take the edge off the terror and these scenes are truly harrowing. It is only her writing that saves her from having her mind hacked to pieces in the name of medical science as she is "offered" a leucotomy. Eventually she leaves, publishes her first novel, and, with a travel grant, goes to Europe. After a romance with a selfish American poet in Spain and after suffering a miscarriage, Janet once more puts herself into psychiatric hospital. She is diagnosed as never having been schizophrenic in the first place and is told by a down-to-earth therapist: "If you don't feel like mixing, then don't."

As with *Sweetie*, Campion makes us ask questions about the conjunction of madness with femininity. Sweetie's behaviour—monstrous, aggressive, self-destructive—also had its own perverse appeal. You couldn't help liking her. And somehow Campion does the same with Janet Frame. Awkward and unattractive, you also care about this woman. This is helped by a breathtaking performance by Kerry Fox.

Both *Sweetie* and Janet disobey or disrupt the myriad rules of feminine behaviour—Sweetie deliberately, Janet disingenuously. Sweetie always goes too far, Janet is paralysed into inaction. The people around them can cope with neither. Madness in Campion's work does not have the lunatic excitement of David Lynch, rather it is a reaction to those everyday codes. And when Janet is finally released from having to understand herself as mad, the whole idea of madness is itself undermined.

For, in the end, what could be more insane than locking up a talented young woman for eight years simply because she is cripplingly shy? Only perhaps believing that electric shocks can take the place of human contact.

Interview

War addict

Amanda Hopkinson talks to photographer Don McCullin

"I'm an alcoholic who will never be cured because I still like to drink. I can't go to war again now because I know that if I did I'd be killed. Providence would say to me: 'Sorry, your ration card is now completely filled up.'" Bang goes the theory that war photographers are necessarily on an extended suicide mission. **Don McCullin** is one who, despite the swashbuckling portraits on the covers of his new autobiography (*Unreasonable Behaviour, An Autobiography with Lewis Chester*, Cape, out next month), has a very keen sense of survival.

It is a sense sharpened by formative experience, by looking around the north London "white ghetto" where he grew up in the 1940s and realising that, here, life frequently remained nasty, brutish and short. As, in the case of his chronically asthmatic father, it was. And for many he knew who didn't die of illnesses exacerbated by dismal housing conditions, violence played a significant part. McCullin's first break—with the *Observer*—came in depicting one of the street gangs he knew so well from his time hanging around the dance halls and terrorising the neighbourhood on his motorbike.

Street living was followed by a spell in the RAF, where McCullin first learnt how to handle a camera, but, as with his sporadic schooling, failed his technical exams. "Dyslexia" is now blamed for his amputated education, and it is significant that the "autobiography" deserves quotation marks for having been painstakingly —and often amusingly—recorded in conversation with Lewis Chester, a former *Sunday Times* colleague.

It was there that McCullin transformed the weekend supplement into something that would turn, rather than soothe, the stomachs and minds of his breakfast-time readers.

McCullin's attitude to his coverage is ambivalent. On the one hand, there are the buccaneering tales on the lines of "I was Idi Amin's prisoner" or of "The Nastiest Place on Earth" (Equatorial Guinea), even of being cast away to languish of thirst, heat and hunger on a desert island (for the *Sunday Telegraph*). On the other hand, there is his self-image as "Sir Walter Raleigh", gentleman and patriot, who would "be the first to sign up in any war for my country" and collapsed into a nervous breakdown largely precipitated by his failure to get a posting to the Malvinas/Falklands war.

Even now, having set aside such escapades in the interests of survival there remains the "restlessness" that always set him off on just one more campaign. "When something like this Gulf crisis develops, I get twinges...I've given it [war photography] up completely, but I have to say that if the MOD rang up and said, 'We'd

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Gasiveran village, Cyprus, 1964: a woman is told that her husband has been killed in the fighting

like you to be the exclusive recorder of the next two weeks', it'd be hard to say no." As to what he'd want to cover in such an event? "The same as always: the plight of the underdog."

The identification with the underdog is, McCullin firmly believes, what most of all informed his career. It was his own "overwhelming sense of insecurity" that led him towards proving, "I'm an individual, a cut above others in life." Differently put: "Selfishness with a great big S." It was this that gave him his sense of mission and his sensibility in constantly reminding us, the viewers, that the language and reality of war can be two such opposed things. Despite strong and lasting relationships with many of the journalists he has worked with, McCullin is still of the school that believes "Journalism is not totally true, even as politics aren't totally true. But I can't lie with my camera." On an early trip to Vietnam to record the US's "pacification" of a "Communist" regime, he was horrified not only at what he found, but also at the contrast with his next assignment in Bihar, where even a few of the resources expended on killing could have saved lives.

It was his desire to relate such colossal squandering back to the human scale that caused McCullin to frame the only shot he's constructed as a propaganda exercise. "It was the body of a US soldier in Vietnam. When the souvenir-hunters had finished their looting, discarding all the personal documents, I thought: 'There's something to be done here.' I realised the Americans didn't like what I was doing [in arranging the family photos and letters by the corpse]—they're not all daft—but they kept looking at me as if I had some magical way of staying alive. It was the one set-up shot I felt justified in taking."

McCullin's "magical way" also underwent some deeply personal changes. His disappointment over the Falklands conflict and the *Sunday Times*'s refusal to run a sequence he took of the Salvadorean civil war forced him to recognise he could no longer work there under Andrew Neil. This combined with the terminal illness of his former wife, Christine, "who had always given strength to my energy" and the breakup of his second marriage. His eldest son left for Australia and McCullin was denied access to the youngest. He withdrew to his house in Somerset, a row of former cottages "joined like a Pullman", and to taking "nature pictures".

McCullin's close-ups of plants alternate with a wider vision of a nature which "you have to be trusted by". He feeds the creatures that visit his garden, rejoicing in the fleeting appearances of woodpeckers and kingfishers, the birth there of a family of fox-cubs. Such bucolic pleasures are clearly interrupted by reminiscences of a very different past life he has wanted to record "before my memory gets jaded".

At the same time, despite the enormous readability of Lewis Chester's ghost-writing, words refuse to become McCullin's medium. As he himself says: "My negatives are my diaries. My life is in my pictures." A temporary lectureship in the US was a disaster and he's refused subsequent offers of teaching posts on the grounds that, "All you need to learn is how to load and process a film. Then just get out and do it," adding the mysterious rider: "Wanting is always much more desirable than having." It is a hunger McCullin is striving hard to tame, and to which his more domesticated photography bears testimony. Yet there is no denying the edge of excitement as he returns to the starting point of his photographic autobiography—and of his career—a shot of a street gang posed as kings of the castle on the surviving joists of a bombed house: "Strange how that's my best negative, though it's one of my first, those boys in the derelict building in Finsbury Park. It's still in tip-top condition."

To McCullin there is little continuity between the north London of his childhood and the territorial battles the world over. On the contrary, a picture as clean as this puts him in the same league, he hopes, as his "major influences": great masters of still photography Steiglitz and Steichen, Bill Brandt and Edwin Smith. Above all else: "I want to be exonerated from being called a war photographer, I detest it so much...I'd just like to be remembered as a *creative* photographer. I'd be happy never to take another war photograph." The trouble is, however wholeheartedly one wishes to, it's impossible to believe that—granted his Iraqi exclusive—he wouldn't be off on the next plane.

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Television

Working out in space

Paul Morley on the relaunch of the Star Trek Enterprise

As you can imagine, I am going to be very serious this week. How on earth, how on Planet X-Chevy LSD, can they follow up one of the greatest TV series of all time, a series that in 2007 and 2095 will still be called one of the greatest TV series of all time?

Seriously, both the cleverest man in the dream world, Vic Reeves, and the thickest man in the clouds, Garry Bushell, have been **Star Trek** struck. Reeves will reveal how his unstructured imagination has been messed up by *Star Trek* by humming the magical quicksilver theme tune, the theme of themes, the transporting melody of a thousand cosmic voyages, at the beginning of one of his shows. Reeves, too intelligent to live a normal life, sees in *Star Trek* such brilliant symbols of the actual way we're supposed to get on with each other, the way we have dreams, fights, fears, disappointments, the way sex and death are on our minds and never mentioned, the way an average day, an average light year, is all a matter of novelty and repetition. For bright sorts, *Star Trek* was so unlike real life that it was just like real life, the junk TV equivalent of a Jackson Pollock abstract.

Bushell of the *Sun* will grunt approval, feelings no doubt based on the Trek females' beamed-up minis, Kirk's emotional conviction that Right is right, Spock's funny foreignness, and the golden conceit that Am-lib capitalist structures of life, language, love and morality are the best in any universe you care to invent a name for. Of course, it never occurred to Gaz that Kirk and Spock were lovers. For Vic, this was obvious, but it didn't really matter—more puzzling were Bones's bellbottoms.

You and I, not as thoughtful as Reeves or as concussed as Bushell, will have *Star Trek* caught at the back of our minds, at the front when the time comes, like any other subreal, supersensical, man-made, simply perfect, protected against deterioration, pop classic.

Let's list some of the reasons why we might have been led to believe that the original *Star Trek* is that most real of things, a pop classic: there has become so much to see into it. A fine example of American pop cultural imperialism, perhaps the vulgar remnants of modernism as it sunk into the minds of the masses, perhaps the early glitter of postmodernism as it leapt as entertainment into the minds of the masses, the series was superstitious fairy tales of slowly decaying American optimism, stuck fast at a time of the evil empire, the space race, Kennedy as legend, a no-nonsense loyalty of the stars and stripes and the constitution.

Like all pop classics, it happened at the right time in the right place, and all of the significance that was gathered around it was not so much because of what it was, but where for some reason it fitted in to some changes in a collective psyche. We might now see it as the starry, starry link between the naïve innocence of Asimov and the sophisticated innocence of Spielberg, just another of those ways a sentimental, romantic creator uses science fiction to make sweeping points about banal, deep-set dilemmas of humanity and shoots straight to the heart of our basest life-fearing death-wondering emotions. We might see it as the biggest link in a camp future loving chain that includes *The Jetsons*, the *Time Tunnel*, *Lost In Space*, *My Favourite Genie*, *Captain Scarlett*, *Ziggy Stardust*, nostalgia for a time yet to come.

So the original *Star Trek* worked out not just in TV space, but right in the spaces of our imagination, because it was shrewd fantasy, because of all that sixties stuff, because the creators were bold enough and foolish enough to use cheap TV to try to warn the world that it

Lt Worf, a Klingon: often impatient with human comrades in "Star Trek"

was self-destructing, because the Enterprise team became a family that was easy to love, because of a pair of pointed ears and a couple of stupid nicknames, because the man who was Kirk looked like he meant it and the man who played Spock nearly didn't play it for laughs. Seriously, how can anyone follow that?

The films that we allowed to cash in on the affections we felt for *Star Trek*, even though they came during the time of Lynch, cyberpunk, Ridley Scott and Carpenter, even though they replaced the hints of spirituality and dollops of idealism with big money and special effects, have done nothing to dismantle the period charm, the history of the future, *the real life* of the original. The 1960s *Star Trek* remains, of course, the Real Thing: the big films, the million-dollar extravaganzas, simply support as little fun reminders the originals, where a peculiarly sixties condensation of something fake and something authentic and a whole lot more meant that these small-budget TV fillers became something much more than just the result of invention, intelligence, money, hype, creative energy, belief.

How can anyone follow that? Easy. Do it again. Do it again, exactly the same, but different. Some might think it's taken me too long to get round to the point of this review—the new television *Star Trek*, but the truth is, there's very little to report, just as there probably was, or wasn't, after the first few originals. Who back then could have imagined that the series would end up so real, so repeated and, as a sixties artefact, so relevant? Spock would have calculated the odds of mythical, cultural and popular success at 465,000:1.

The new generation begins, as did its ancestor, with all the confidence in the solar system, and we are immediately presented with an Enterprise family, lovingly assembled, and a liberal mix of races, beings, tradition and eccentricity. If there was any tangible key to the success of *Star Trek*, perhaps this classic way of combining characters and temperaments was the most important. Achieved well, it is the basic winning TV formula.

It is why "The Next Generation" is already entertaining TV, before it is or isn't anything else. It is, in fact, just like *Star Trek* would have been—smart, progressive, articulate—if it had come after *LA Law*. Patrick Stewart, the head of the family, so un-Kirkian it is positively cosmic, gives the series much of its smooth, sophisticated power, treating those dumb and dreamy deep space plots with as much fire and sincerity as he would anything written by Shakespeare or Pinter, and already hinting at secret depths and private struggles and even adding a dash of neurotic danger. In the 1990s future, humanity is still special, but part of that specialness is its fearful unpredictability.

The rest of the family, Worf the Klingon, Riker the man who would be Kirk, the telepathic Counsellor Troi, the impetuous Security Officer Yar, and Data, our Spock substitute, the android who wants to be human, are all perfectly made up ready to get under our skin.

The Enterprise itself is still as important as ever. The mission remains the same: so do the plots. But this future is different because we know more, we've changed so much in the past 20 years, and the Next Generation implicitly acknowledges that, not just in its theme tune. We think we know what to expect, we feel we've seen it all, and it's less likely that things can take us by surprise as they did in the original *Star Trek*. For these reasons, Spock would calculate that the chances of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* becoming a cultural, mythical *and* popular success, to be of the nineties and in the nineties in the way that *Star Trek* was so much of the sixties, are 1,567,654:1.

It should become popular entertainment, but never a pop classic. But then the creators of *Star Trek*, as was and is, would say that the whole point is that we never know as much as we think, and who knows? Who on earth seriously knows?

Star Trek: The Next Generation, *BBC2, Wednesdays at 6pm.*

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Thoroughly modern monarch

KING EDWARD VIII: THE OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHY
Philip Ziegler
Collins £20

Kenneth O Morgan

Edward VIII, king for 11 months, was part-creator of the modern British monarchy. He was largely responsible for the blend of glamour and unimportance that marks the crown in the late 20th century. His iconoclasm and raffish lifestyle brought the crown into the contemporary world, free from Victorian stuffiness. He is the precursor of Di, Fergie and their associates.

At the same time, his abdication ensured that the throne would not be occupied by a monarch with decided views of his own, especially on unemployment and foreign policy, but would fall instead into the passive hands of George VI. The result was that most of the remaining crown initiatives (underlined as recently as the crisis of 1931) withered away. The tension that resulted has continued to plague the royal family down to the present time. No less than the East Enders of Albert Square, the West Enders of St James's find life brutish and short, if neither solitary nor poor.

The endless fascination with the career of Edward VIII is amply illustrated by this "official biography" by Philip Ziegler. It has been written with the full cooperation of the Queen: the preface contains a warm tribute to her private secretary. At the same time, it is very far from being dull, or a monument to discretion and officialese. On the contrary, the quantity of indiscreet personal revelations is astonishing, even if the predictable effect is to make Edward seem weak and generally pathetic throughout, and to blacken Mrs Simpson's remaining reputation with a rigour that borders on ruthlessness. This is, in part, because Ziegler has been diligent in unearthing other material also. In particular, the 2,000-odd letters to Mrs Dudley Ward, a royal mistress over a lengthy period, shed a powerful light on Edward's character and outlook.

The book is very much a traditional biography, concentrating on personal relationships. It makes only a limited attempt to place Edward in a wider analysis of the modern monarchy. Ziegler is no Bagehot. There is no great awareness of the political context. Thus, for instance, the point of Keir Hardie's angry speech, when the Commons acclaimed the royal birth in 1894, is missed: it was, in fact, a protest against the failure to pay heed to a pit disaster in Cilfynydd, which cost the lives of 251 Welsh miners (incidentally, "Cymmr" pit does not exist). Baldwin's handling of the abdication crisis in 1936 is not related to his delicate position as Tory leader. The book does not deal with the fascinating implications of the abdication for Anglo-Irish relations—namely, that it largely ended the remaining association with the British state. For a week, Edward VIII was King of Ireland when no longer King of England—which at least disproves the view that de Valera had no sense

"Remote and unforgiving": Queen Mary's attitude towards her eldest son contributed to Edward VIII's miserable childhood

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of humour. Finally, the rigours of postwar "austerity" in Attlee's Britain are much exaggerated.

But it would be wrong to be over-critical. The book is splendidly written, admirably judicious in handling source material, and a thoroughly good read. It does not make Edward VIII a tragic hero—rather a flawed *farceur*—but that is a comment on the subject rather than the author.

Edward's upbringing was such that he never had a chance. He had a miserable childhood, with George V a martinet and Queen Mary remote and unforgiving (the more so after his marriage). He had a dull tutor, an unprofitable time at Osborne and Oxford, and spent the war resenting the fact that he was too protected and deprived of the opportunity for service granted to his contemporaries.

He seemed to find himself, and created a major role in public life, in the 1920s, when he began a series of exciting, if exhausting, royal tours to all parts of the empire, added to several highly enjoyable visits to the United States. But even here, according to this account, he spent much of the time depressed and in a state of near-breakdown, partly the result of sheer fatigue, partly of problems of protocol such as how a prince of extreme right-wing views could possibly dance with black women in countries such as Sierra Leone ("That's too much"). He had few friends; some of them, such as the famous "Fruity" Metcalfe, he treated very callously.

Clearly he wanted to develop a serious interest in politics, to "be a king" like George III. But this led to difficulties. Unemployment genuinely stirred his social conscience. But, inevitably, it led to conflict with Baldwin, Chamberlain and the "depressed areas" ideology of the National government. On foreign affairs, he evolved in the twenties an embarrassing, half-racial admiration for Germany, an enthusiasm if anything strengthened by the advent of Hitler. But, while congenial to the *Daily Mail* and the fellow-travellers of the right, this too led to strain with ministers. He became the friend of successive German ambassadors, including Ribbentrop (who thought of him "as a kind of English National Socialist"). The climax, his trip to Germany after the abdication in 1937, which included a visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden, merely underlined the anomalous position of a king trying to assert his own half-baked prejudices in the conduct of foreign policy.

The happiest—and also the most difficult—area of his life was sex. He was, apparently, a slow learner; but some royal equerries, remarkably, introduced him, at the age of 22, to an Amiens-based French prostitute called Paulette. Ziegler informs us that "she did her work with tact and skill". His girlfriends were in some ways irrelevances; even Mrs Dudley Ward did not really threaten his bachelor status. But then came Mrs Simpson, about whom Ziegler is unremittingly harsh. Towards her, Edward's devotion was total.

In the abdication crisis he floundered between impossible solutions and generally cut a pathetic figure—though someone whose main enemies included Archbishop Cosmo Lang and Geoffrey Dawson of the *Times* cannot have been all bad. Misled by Churchill and Beaverbrook, Edward vastly exaggerated his strength. Baldwin deftly impelled him towards the abdication and oblivion. It remains a disturbing story, not least for the hypocrisy about divorce at the time (equally prevalent with Attlee and the Labour Party). But it must be added that the elevation of George VI meant that the nation was spared a man with anachronistic views (and proto-Fascist ones at that) on the role of the crown. A constitutional crisis was thus averted.

Edward VIII was 42 years old when he abdicated. The remaining 36 years of his life make a truly sad story. There were endless conflicts with George VI, Queen Mary and various premiers over money, status and especially over a vain attempt to make Mrs Simpson a duchess. The newly created Duke of Windsor played an ambiguous role in the war and had a hard time as Governor of the Bahamas, whose racial tensions he could not understand. After 1945, lapsing into gloomy anti-socialist bigotry, he lived miserably in exile in Paris, revisiting Britain only on rare occasions. The American connection became weaker, which the Duke may have welcomed since his political hero was Barry Goldwater. Attempts to find a viable role in public life failed. His sole consolation was a typically kind visit by the Queen in 1972 when he was dying of cancer. Truly it was a prolonged diminuendo.

Edward VIII no longer seems the hero built up by star treatment in New York or popular acclaim in the Welsh valleys. But neither was he the ogre that many upper-class witnesses cited here claim. In the end, E M Forster-like personal loyalty led him into a supreme historic sacrifice. Rather than condemn him, it would be more to the point to blame those responsible for his inhuman and wasted childhood, the politicians who used him and then destroyed him, and the atmosphere of foetid sycophancy and imperialist nostalgia which has given the British monarchy such an ambiguous role in the modern world.

A pudding of puns

HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES
Salman Rushdie
Granta Books £12.99

Edward Blishen

It really isn't possible (I've tried) to read or judge this book without regard—not in detail, but in general—to its author's plight. It is dedicated to his son, Zafar. The acrostic in which the dedication is cast ends with the lines: "As I wander far from view/Read, and bring me home to you."

The exuberantly magical tale is of a professional storyteller, Rashid, known as the Shah of Blah, who lives in the sad city of Alfibay, and loses his wife ("What are these stories? Life is not a storybook or a joke shop. All this fun will come to no good"): she runs away with a miserable rag of a man who "has no imagination at all. This is okay by me." Rashid then loses his gift.

He and his son (Haroun, of course) set out to fulfil a storytelling engagement in the Valley of Kosh-Mar, which has more than punning resemblance to Kashmir. (The book is a great pudding of puns.) Rashid's stories, which he seems horribly likely to be incapable of telling, are to serve the purposes of a particularly nasty politician, who holds that happy tales will spread their happiness to the people, who will accordingly vote for him. But in the night, on a houseboat, Haroun wakes to find a Water Genie at work with a Disconnector: a sort of magical monkey wrench. He is formally cutting off Rashid's access to the Sea of Stories.

The Genie talks like a turban-topped Roget. When Haroun confiscates the Disconnector, he cries: "Hand it over, return to sender, restore to rightful owner." Refusing to obey any of these variants of command, Haroun earns the right to visit Gup City, from which the Sea of Stories is managed. And here he finds that fiction is under fire from worse enemies than the wives of wily politicians: the sinister Khattam-Shud (the glossary says that's Hindustani for "over and done with") is engaged with his shadowy henchmen in poisoning the Sea of Stories. Haroun is the hero of the struggle that follows, and solutions brought about in Gup City turn out to be solutions back home.

It's a tale that springs clearly enough out of the predicament of a writer who, by elaborate chance, has taken upon his shoulders the whole implicit peril of the storyteller's trade. The wonder of it lies in its quite uncrushed gaiety. Written into it is the best answer to those who would emasculate and enslave the human imagination: and that lies in the pure health and happiness arising from its exercise.

There has always been a sense in which Rushdie has drawn on a certain clumsiness of invention, a sort of over-strenuousness, in order to generate the energy that sets him writing at his best. Here you sometimes feel that a runabout has been provided with an engine suitable for a heavy-duty vehicle: or that displays of fireworks are occurring in dangerously cramped areas. But the liveliness is constant, the morals merge with the magic as in the best children's stories, and the author's valuable irreverence touches much that is the better for being touched.

So a romantic prince is more than half daft, and his beloved has the worst singing voice in the world. The difficult image of the Sea of Stories, with its coloured streams, stands up to the wear imposed upon it. The relation of father and son is tenderly managed—especially Haroun's embarrassment at being constantly discovered by his parent to have more in him than meets the eye. And in the last pages all the puns fall into each other's arms, and the people of Alfibay remember the real name of their city. It is Kahani: and that's Hindustani for (of course) "Story".

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Paperbacks

Divided families

Carole Angier

Arthur Samuels Wolff was born in Connecticut in 1907 to a rich, old, assimilated Jewish family. He was clever and lazy and given too much of everything except his father's love. As a boy he began well in half-a-dozen Holden Caulfield prep schools before being expelled from all of them. At 16 he was already buying himself the best clothes with dud cheques, running up huge bills, and ordering gold from Dr Wolff's suppliers by pretending to be his father. At 30, having learned that his inheritance had been mortgaged away, he set off—with splendid aptness—to Hollywood, with a pregnant wife and a wholly fictional cv.

For the next 30 years he lied and duped his way across America, keeping—until the end—just ahead of creditors and doubters, relying on his imagination and the need of salesmen to sell. In his forties he was remarried to a rich woman and called himself Saunders Ansell-Wolff III. In his fifties his drinking took over, he broke down, no one believed him any more. He ended up going from jail to jail as once he'd gone from school to school. Endlessly reinventing himself meant cutting himself off from the audience of each previous invention. When he died no one missed him until he began to smell.

With his first wife, Rosemary, the daughter of an ex-Irish navy officer, this sad, amazing man had two sons, both accidents. Unsurprisingly, the marriage cracked under the strain. At 12 the elder son went to live with his father; the younger stayed with his mother. Neither half-family saw the other for many years. But, in their forties, these two, the father's son and the mother's son, each wrote the story of his own and his parent's lives. And out of these accidents, out of this appalling mess and failure, they have made two of the best books I have read for a very long time.

Geoffrey, the elder, writes almost exclusively about his father in *The Duke of Deception* (Vintage £5.99). Anyone would have to, I think, who'd lived close to such an extraordinary character. And this is Geoffrey's point: how much more interesting his father's failure and unbelonging were than the conventional, all-American success he pretended to be. His own first novel was a similar snobbish fantasy; and his tutor told him to put it in a drawer and burn the desk. The reason it was so awful, he says, is the same reason he lied as a young man: because he didn't trust the truth to be interesting enough. "I forced my history, just as my father forced his," he writes. But luckily for him, and for us, he learned to form it instead.

His book is agonisingly funny and sad ("My life was no unbroken series of humiliations, only an almost unbroken series of humiliations"), and gently, beautifully written. He doesn't spare his father or himself, but he doesn't condemn them; he doesn't simplify or romanticise in either direction. He takes us on the whole painful journey, from childhood worship through adolescent shame to adult compassion for this man who tried to teach his son to be everything he wasn't—brave, honest and enduring; and in this one thing succeeded.

Tobias, the younger son, was both luckier and unluckier than his brother. Arthur was a mad fantasist, but during Geoffrey's boyhood he borrowed, married and stole the fruits of success for him—money, nice houses, a good education. Rosemary was sane and strong; but after Arthur she sank into dirt-poor, white-trash America. She managed only dead-end jobs; she was drawn to violent, brutish men, and, in a tragi-comedy of good intentions, brilliantly described by Toby in *This Boy's Life* (Picador £4.99), she married one of them.

While Geoff went to Choate and Princeton, Toby lived in a company town in the boondocks and went to Concrete High, 39 miles down a mountain. Geoff's problem was inward: to distinguish truth from lies, love from shame. Toby's was simpler: to survive the cruelty of his schoolfellows, his teachers, his stepfather. If Geoffrey's best insights are into the complexities of love, Toby's are into those of hate. His portrait of his stepfather, the hopeless, useless, sadistic Dwight, is as unforgettable as Geoffrey's of Arthur. Through Dwight you glimpse the possibility of Auschwitz, and of My Lai; and through Toby himself, too, who hated Dwight so much "it disfigured me", but who, when he felled his best friend with the punch Dwight had taught him, felt a "surge of pride and connection" to him. So victims secretly admire their oppressors and, despite themselves, aspire to their power.

It is fascinating to read these two books together. From their opposite poles they throw into relief the awful effects of winning on winners and losing on losers: the awful effects, especially, of anti-Semitism on Jews. It is fascinating to see the same story from the other's point of view; to see these brothers' differences, and still more their similarities. Together they demonstrate the power of inheritance, for good and for evil; for both inherit from their father a tendency to lie and steal—but also to love literature and their children. And their books also demonstrate the opposite, the possibility of change. For the worst parents of all are Arthur's and Rosemary's fathers; and, though both are cursed by them, they do not pass their curses on to the next generation. Both books are triumphs, therefore: not just that they were written, and how, but in what they ultimately say.

We too have a pair of contemporary classics by the children of a divided family: J R Ackerley's *My Father and Myself* and Diana Petre's *The Secret Orchard of Roger Ackerley*. If you haven't read these yet—well, I envy you. Recently there's been a revival of interest in Ackerley, who died in 1967: a film (of *We Think the World of You*), and a good biography (by Peter Parker). Penguin has re-issued the novels; and now there is a paperback of the posthumously published *My Sister and Myself* (Oxford University Press £5.99).

Ackerley, as his half-sister Diana says, writes like an angel, and though *My Sister and Myself* is a selection from his diaries (excellently edited and introduced by Francis King), it is as perfectly written as all his work.

Like the Wolff books, it is about a love-hate relationship; and tells us as much, as well, about the writer as about his subject. But what it tells us is sadder. Ackerley's sister was an under-educated, under-occupied, neurotic woman, fixatedly in love with her homosexual brother. She drove him mad with her dependence and demands; he did his best to be kind, but usually wasn't. This portrait is his last unkindness, because it is so good: "the beautiful Nancy Ackerley" is fixed forever as the archetype of the boring, capricious, possessive, interfering woman.

She wasn't so with others, after his death; it was he who made her so, or rather her love for him, and his inability to return it. No one knew his coldness and treachery better than Ackerley himself, and here he explores them again, delicately and deeply. *My Sister and Myself* makes clearer than ever before his loathing of women and his impatience with people altogether, even those he loved—his mother, his Aunt Bunny (a splendid portrait), his working-class lover. Ackerley, too, learned about love from his parents: and so, despite appearances, he was unluckier than the Wolff brothers. His mother only really loved her Sealyhams; and Ackerley only really loved his Alsatian bitch Queenie. And writing: ah yes, and writing.

At home in Hong Kong

SONS OF THE YELLOW EMPEROR: THE STORY OF THE OVERSEAS CHINESE
Lynn Pan
Secker & Warburg £17.99

Piers Gray

There are 30 million overseas Chinese and they are—according to Lynn Pan—to be found in 109 of the world's countries. Ubiquitous and (despite being in legend all offspring of a single progenitor, the Yellow Emperor Huang Ti) various as the excellent photographs in her book show. On one page stands a group of Chinese gentlemen in what appear to be tail-coats and bowler hats. Behind them is a village church: "A Chinese funeral, in England, 1922." On another, Margaret Thatcher smirks with Lee Kuan Yew, a Cambridge double first in law with a star to boot. On a third, Bruce Lee is furiously putting the fist in.

This is a long book (which makes its slovenly index even more reprehensible), but Lynn Pan clearly wanted to be meticulous in telling a story which is based on straightforward historical accounts of the different stages of Chinese migrations. From early 16th-century traders'

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voyages throughout the South China Sea, consequent migrations to the Philippines (Cory Aquino is of Chinese descent), Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Mauritius and beyond, the stories of these settlements veer from assimilated-poor-boy-making-good (fortunes in Soy sauce and bird's nest soup) to savage native hostility: massacres in 17th-century Manila, race riots in 20th-century Indonesia and Malaysia.

But the area around the southern coastline was only the beginning: in the 19th century the railroads of North America, the gold mines of Australia and South Africa, were respectively built and mined by Chinese labourers, while, in the 20th, men from Shantung province were to be found on the Western Front digging trenches: near Noyelles-sur-Mer "shaded by cedars and maidenhair trees" are laid out the graves of 838 Chinese.

And then there are those facts you did not wish to learn. Between 1847 and 1877, 126,000 coolies landed in Cuba: two thirds of them died, lashed and starved, having been deceived or simply kidnapped into transportation and horrible suffering on the island's sugar plantations. This, Lynn Pan laconically observes, was "the nadir". It goes without saying that the European comes out of the overall story badly: indentured labour in the 19th century was a form of short-term slavery. Nevertheless, the whole matter of Chinese/European relations is not simple. And it is here that this book moves from the past to the present.

By far the majority of modern Chinese migrants have come from the southern coast that stretches from Hainan Island (about 300 miles west of Hong Kong) up to Shanghai. Among the region's different linguistic groups the most substantial modern migrant force has been the Cantonese: they dominate overseas Chinese communities in Britain, Canada, the United States and Australia. In the major cities of these countries they remain in touch with the most important cultural fact of their collective lives—Hong Kong. They read its newspapers (transmitted via satellite), devour its pop videos and enjoy its cuisine. And, of course, as Lynn Pan points out, it is Hong Kong—the subject of this book's final chapter—which exists as a paradoxical model for the whole history of the overseas Chinese.

For, unlike any other overseas community, this one ironically lies within China itself. Every day illegal immigrants attempt to penetrate its fenced borders: it is the city of gold from which—if times get really interesting—you can hope to reach the Gold Mountain—the United States. Families arrive and, within two generations, exchange rural poverty and illiteracy for university degrees. It is the greatest Chinese city in the world and its real and symbolic importance, as its apparent demise approaches, cannot be underestimated: for Hong Kong is a terrible indictment of China itself. Even if, at the Lunar New Year, hundreds of thousands leave it for their native villages—to feast and celebrate—the stay in China is always temporary, and with good reason.

Several years ago I steamed up this coast to visit the new university at Swatow. It was built with money endowed by Li Ka-shing, Hong Kong's richest man and most famous immigrant: in origin a Chiu Chow refugee from the Japanese—£30 million was obviously one way of appeasing the spirits of his birthplace. Rising in the midst of barren scrubland, from a distance, buildings gleamed magnificence. Once on the campus, however, it became evident that things were falling apart: not in a major way—simply that lavatories in the guest houses apparently had never been cleaned; rubbish littered the lawns between buildings; televisions wouldn't work; books had yet to fill the library. There was a sense of desolation and, on returning to the port, passing through a swarm of begging children and women, I felt a terrible sadness.

For behind the stories of the overseas Chinese—whether of smashing success or unendurable suffering—lies the truth which haunts every "overseas" resident of Hong Kong. It is expressed thus in the last two sentences of Lynn Pan's book: "When they leave [China] after their visit they feel they have left something of themselves behind, yet they also realise that they could never live there. Deep in their hearts they know that they love China best when they live well away from the place." Away, that is, in places founded by overseas Europeans: Hong Kong while it lasts and then—because it won't—Sydney, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Toronto. Home.

Not like Islington

SYMPOSIUM
Muriel Spark
Constable £11.95

Lucasta Miller

"The true artist in tragedy," says Socrates, "is an artist in comedy also." It's hard to work out what Muriel Spark is up to when she prefaces her new novel with a quote from Plato, especially since this *Symposium* seems to contain very little in the way of either comedy or tragedy. In the Middle Ages you could just stick in a couple of "so Aristotle saiths", or what have you, as a way of bumping up your credibility with the reader. As an established author, you wouldn't have thought that Spark needed to worry about her credibility. But on the evidence of this disappointing tale—it's hard to believe that it's the work of the brilliant inventor of Miss Brodie—there might indeed be some cause for anxiety.

Symposium begins and ends at the same dinner party in Islington, taking an interim detour around the previous experiences of its protagonists. Hurley Reed, an artist, and his "life companion" (female), Chris Donovan, are entertaining a group of wealthy, upper-middle-class, half-formed characters in their turquoise dining room. Lord Suzy, a middle-aged *roué* married to his daughter's 22-year-old best friend, bangs on about his recent burglary. Ernst, who has an office in Brussels, and his academic wife Ella, share an erotic fascination for Luke, who's an American student playing waiter *chez* Reed and Donovan to get himself, or so he says, through college. Then there's William Damien, in his twenties and the son of a millionairess; he has recently married a girl called Margaret, whom he met in the fruit section of a branch of Marks & Spencer.

But this is no ordinary dinner party. The burglary, the American waiter, and Margaret, sweetly sinister with sexy protruding teeth and Lizzie Siddal hair, become twisted together in a series of underdeveloped plots that feature multiple murder, mystery, conspiracy and Margaret's mad Scottish uncle, Magnus.

You might expect a dinner party so precise in its geographical location to offer some scope for a little comedy of manners. But then, the essence of that sort of comedy is exaggerated accuracy. Perhaps I have a limited acquaintance in Islington, but, as far as I am aware, few of its inhabitants employ starchy butlers called Charterhouse or drink dry martinis. Another potential comic opportunity is almost lost when we're taken on a detour into a trendy Anglican convent. There's a limit to how funny a foul-mouthed nun can be.

When it comes to tragedy, there are enough deaths to satisfy even the most hardened Jacobean. But there's no guilt, or fear, or pathos, or remorse. Despite some vatic moralising on the part of Uncle Magnus, any sense of good and evil goes limp. Only in detective stories and horror movies do deaths occur with so little circumspection on the part of the author. This book has hints of both genres. But it's no good as a whodunnit, because we're told who did it before he does it. And the purported presence of the evil eye is too fleetingly suggested to be spine-chilling.

If *Symposium* is supposed to be read as a mixture of comedy and tragedy, laced with some sort of Socratic irony, it can only disappoint. It has too many half-characters and too many half-plots to rescue it from a fundamental flimsiness.

Return to the south

THE DISTANT LANDS
Julian Green
Marion Boyars/Secker & Warburg £14.99

Clive Davis

Make no mistake: this is an enormous book, 900 pages long, and stuffed with historical bric-a-brac, including a detailed genealogical chart. In France, Green's adopted country, the novel (known there as *Les Pays Lointains*) has sold no fewer than 650,000 copies in hardback. It is, we are assured, the book that will finally establish his reputation in the English-speaking world.

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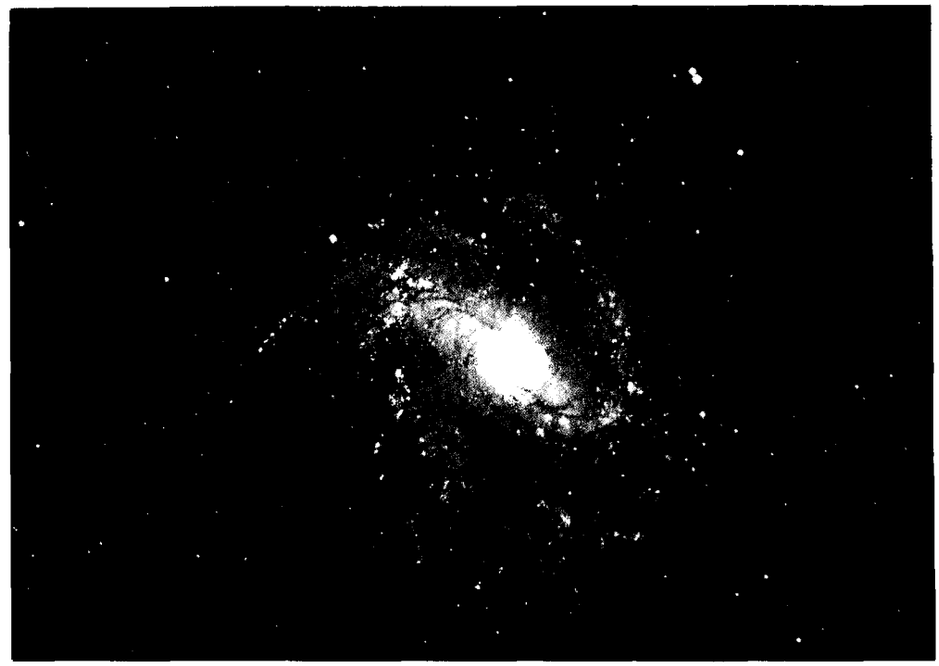
Green celebrated his ninetieth birthday this month. Born in Paris of American parents, he studied at the University of Virginia before returning to Paris and becoming neatly categorised as a "Catholic writer". He published his first novel in 1926, and later became the first foreigner to be elected to the Académie Française. He actually began work on *The Distant Lands* in the thirties, but abandoned it because he felt the subject matter—the plantation aristocracy of the ante-bellum south—was too close to *Gone With The Wind*. Years later he returned to his labours. He has already completed a sequel, *Les Etoiles du Sud*.

The experiences of Green's teenage heroine, Elizabeth Escridge, are said to have been modelled on those of his own mother. Arriving in Georgia in 1850, Elizabeth comes from a proud but impoverished English family. Living with her more prosperous relatives, in a mansion with the forbidding name of Dimwood, she is introduced to the superficial opulence and profound uncertainties of southern life. There are lavish parties, rakish lovers, duels at 20 paces, black servants endowed with supernatural powers and, above all, a steady flow of political conversation at the dinner table. It is in these background passages that Green's elegant prose tends to falter: "'You forget,' he said in a flat voice, 'that in 1832 there was a rebellion in South Carolina over a question of tariffs imposed by the North. General Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, sent troops and ships to Charleston and South Carolina had to give in. It seceded, but the South did not follow suit.'"

Gore Vidal has shown that historical fiction can be absorbing, educational and good fun. His tales of Lincoln playing pranks on his cabinet ministers are just as memorable as his account of the Gettysburg Address. Green is a masterful storyteller, but his touch sometimes lacks conviction: at times it is as if André Gide were trying his hand at a Jilly Cooper potboiler. The subtle exposition of a young woman's moral and emotional development sits uneasily alongside a narrative full of stock devices and lovers with riding crops. One minute Green is making scholarly quotations from the *Book of Daniel*, the next he is extolling "love at first sight in the Southern night, with its enchanting perfumes, and the flashing of two pale, deep eyes, in which a gentle but terrible passion burned."

Whatever impact *The Distant Lands* makes in British literary circles, it is hard to imagine the book repeating the commercial success it enjoyed in France. The mass market here will probably be more interested in the unabashed bodice-rippers that catch the eye in supermarkets. Books like those tend to have covers depicting some over-developed black buck groping a delicate southern belle. The sleeve of *The Distant Lands* is much more discreet, with its detail of a scene from Monet's *Femmes au Jardin*. Yet I am not sure that Green is any more sensitive in his handling of black characters: the old image of childish negroes rolling their eyes is trotted out too often for comfort. *Gone With The Wind* was bad enough; Green is too good a writer to need to follow in the footsteps of Margaret Mitchell.



Our stars, ourselves

UNIVERSE
Michael Rowan-Robinson
Longman £17.95

Bernard Dixon

For over 15 years, first at Oxford University Press, then with W H Freeman and now at Longman, Michael Rodgers has been incubating and midwifing popular science books of both high interpretive quality and significant cultural importance. Pausing only to emit occasional puffs of frustration, he has also sought to engage the interest of the posh newspapers' literary editors in his authors' works. Despite considerable success in the first of these endeavours, Rodgers has often failed in the second. Even Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene* and *The Blind Watchmaker*, which combined excellence in the explanation of complex biological concepts with limpid and sensitive analysis of their philosophical implications, were neglected in certain quarters in favour of third-rate political memoirs.

Now we have *Universe*. Will this elegant, enriching and ingeniously constructed portrait of the material universe appeal to the gatekeepers at the heavies? If not, both midwife Rodgers and author Rowan-Robinson will be justified in concluding, 30 years after the publication of C P Snow's Rede Lecture, that cultural blindness is as prevalent as ever among the custodians of literary tradition.

"By this the northern wagoner had set
His sevenfold team behind the steadfast starre
That was in ocean waves never yet wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendith light from farre
To all that in the wide deep wandering arre..."

As Rowan-Robinson points out, an astonishing amount of astronomical information appears in those few lines from the *Faerie Queen*. Edmund Spenser writes here about Polaris and Ursa Major, the relationship of the Plough and the Pole Star, the fact that the Plough never sets, the steadfastness of the Pole Star and its use for navigation. The quotation is one of many used not as embellishments in *Universe* but as crucial components of its very fabric. Cited alongside technical findings from the sciences of astronomy and cosmology, they contribute equally to the unique character of an exceptional and unusual piece of work.

Not the least distinctive feature of this handsomely illustrated exploration is the initially implausible, but in practice triumphant, idea of recounting "all that is known today about the universe" by means of chapters devoted to 20 famous astronomical objects. Beginning with Comet Halley and moving through such diverse and diverting "objects" as Sirius, Alpha Centauri and the Milky Way, we are introduced to a wealth of fact, theory and speculation.

En route, several half-baked ideas, already familiar through popular books, are either fully baked or thrown into the peddle-bin. I particularly warmed to Rowan-Robinson's rebuttal of Robert Temple's declaration that the Dogon people of Mali, who in the 1930s were found to believe that Sirius had a dark, dense companion, must have acquired this belief from intelligent beings from another planet. More likely, they had been visited by intelligent, or at least well-informed, beings from planet Earth—missionaries, for example—who would have heard about Walter Adams's discovery of Sirius B in 1915.

"When did we stop looking at the night sky?" Rowan-Robinson asks. "Today there are very few people, and that includes astronomers, who can identify more than a few of the most obvious constellations. Yet it was once very different.

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Two or three thousand years ago, people had a very thorough knowledge of the night sky and its motions." The change, it seems, has followed the realisation that the heavens hold no omens or meaning for human destiny. Copernicus, Galileo and their modern heirs have supplanted superstitious dependency with confident, comprehensive, rational explanation.

But that is not the whole story. Without any relaxation of intellectual rigour—quite the reverse—the most forceful message of *Universe* is that human origins and destiny *are* inseparable from the birth, evolution and death of our own sun and the countless other stars in the immensity of space. Astronomy holds far more profound lessons for humankind than the pedestrian trivia of astrology.

The original disco man

LIVING IN AMERICA: THE SOUL SAGA OF JAMES BROWN
Cynthia Rose
Serpent's Tail £6.99

David Upshal

He's probably the most monickered man in music history: Mr Please Please Please, Soul Brother Number One, The Hardest Working Man in Showbusiness, Mr Dynamite Himself, The Ruler of R'n'B, Mr Excitement, The Original Disco Man, Mr Superbad, Minister of the New New Super Heavy Funk, The Godfather of Soul and The Forefather of Hip-Hop. JAMES "Butane" BROWN!!!

There's no disputing that over the past 34 years James Brown has picked up a lot of nicknames. They are matched by one hell of a reputation as a tirelessly innovative performer. *Living in America* seeks to contextualise Brown's colossal contribution to music, style, politics and culture in America and beyond. Having spoken directly to Brown, Cynthia Rose proceeds to match his musical achievements against the perceptions of friends, critics, musicians, modern historians and DJs.

What they all agree on is that a whole generation of modern pop stars owes it all to James Brown—Michael Jackson his "moonwalk", Prince his stunning, strutting, sexy stage show, rappers in Hip-Hop the break beats they rap to, Public Enemy their very name. Like his contemporary (and friend), Elvis Presley, James Brown has cast a giant shadow that refuses to fade despite his own personal setbacks.

If *Living in America* has any flaw it's that it tends to condone, instead of condemn, the worst of Brown's character defects.

Perhaps the fact that as a six year old, parentless and penniless, he was dancing and hustling for money on the streets of Macon, Georgia, explains the sheer drive and survival power of a man who has clawed his way to stardom through pure hard work and ingenuity. But does it excuse the behaviour of an egotistical tyrant who has bullied and manipulated many of the people who worked most closely with him? "James Brown is bossy and paranoid . . . evil," according to former bandleader Fred Wesley.

In 1988 Brown found himself sentenced to two successive six-year terms in prison for aggravated assault and failing to stop for police. That was the kind of good ole honest fun that Elvis could always square with the good ole boys down at the station house. But then Brown has always epitomised the social position of black Americans, whether playing to some of the first desegregated audiences in the south, endorsing presidential candidates (first the Democrat Hubert Humphrey, then the Republican Richard Nixon), or singing anthem hits like "Say It Loud I'm Black and I'm Proud" and "I Don't Want Nobody to Give Me Nothing (Open up the Door I'll Get It Myself)".

At nearly 60 years of age and with a huge question mark still hanging over his release date, Brown would appear to be finished. But no one who knows him would count him out yet. "Years ago," the singer Vicki Anderson testifies, "wherever there was a male child in black homes he tried to do 'The Jamesbrown'. James came from being a shoeshine boy to being the number one entertainer in the world. James can do anything he wants to do. He is the strongest-minded person I've ever known."

Kids' stories for grown-ups

THE OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH DETECTIVE STORIES
Patricia Craig (editor)
Oxford University Press £15
THE PENGUIN BOOK OF BRITISH COMIC STORIES
Patricia Craig (editor)
Viking £15.99

Jeremy Lewis

One of the problems with anthologies is striking a balance between the familiar and the unexpected, between old chestnuts whose non-appearance may seem to some perverse and to others a welcome relief, and private enthusiasms of a kind that may seem inexplicable to some while opening whole new vistas to the more adventurous reader. Whether innovatory or conventional, the editor is almost certain to get his or her knuckles rapped, more often than not for sins of omission. But it's good to report that, in terms of sheer enjoyment, Patricia Craig's two anthologies—both ideally tailored for that publisher's Grail, the Christmas market—have a great deal to offer.

Humour being an altogether more elusive and subjective business than crime and detection, it's hardly surprising that the Oxford book has a more unified and, perhaps, a more predictable feeling to it, or that its excellent introduction should be longer, more informative and a good deal funnier than its Penguin equivalent.

Defining, or even writing about, humour is a notoriously dodgy business, probably best avoided, so that whereas Patricia Craig (very understandably) ushers on her comic turns via a few enthusiastic generalities, the sleuths—whose creators range from Conan Doyle and R Austin Freeman to P D James, Ruth Rendell and Simon Brett, by way of Ronald Knox, Margery Allingham and Agatha Christie—are preceded by an admirable essay in which she traces the history and development of "one of the most pungent offshoots" of the short story proper.

As Craig points out, paradox—and not just in the Father Brown sense—is inseparable from the genre, whereas real-life murder is apt to be squalid and undramatic: "the first task facing detective writers is to superimpose a decorative outline over the disagreeable business in which they have involved themselves." In its most extreme form, this led, in the 1920s in particular, to the cult of "decorous detection", to mysteries set in clubs and country houses and Oxford colleges, which were wittily resolved by urbane gentleman practitioners. As the second world war neared, the real world began to manifest itself rather more forcibly via "an increasing amount of acrimony in the home", with "more than one suburban householder discovering an urgent motive for wiping out his wife". Though the tough American-style private eye has never really caught on over here, modern practitioners have replaced "the old-fashioned, clear-cut morality of the past" with "an amiable cynicism and admiration for expediency, which is thoroughly bracing in effect".

Craig quotes approvingly Elizabeth Bowen's description of detective stories as "the only above-board grown-up children's stories", but it's hard to believe that some of the authors included in *British Comic Stories*—Richmal Crompton, represented here by William at his best, or P G Wodehouse—might not qualify as well.

As one might expect, the (highly congenial) Penguin anthology includes rather more of the unexpected or unfamiliar (Somerset Maugham, Ian Crichton Smith, Katherine Mansfield, Jeanette Winterson, James Kelman) than the Oxford book, as well as old favourites like "Basil Seal Rides Again". Not surprisingly, perhaps, the Irish are out in force (Benedict Kiely, Frank O'Connor, Beckett, Kathleen FitzPatrick, John Morrow): the best items are those (like Waugh's) which combine comicality with melancholy, good jokes with a twist of the knife—Henry Green's firewatchers waiting in vain for the bombs to fall, Naipaul's harassed West Indian hotel porter, William Trevor's dismal party-goers, Beryl Bainbridge's disastrous luncheon party and, most pleasing of all, Michael Frayn's tiny, lethal playlet about three car-crazed sons visiting their mother and talking of nothing but the best route home and life behind the wheel ("To become personal for a moment, Howard, how's your car?").

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PUBLIC INTEREST

More means less

What must be done to make the social fund work properly?

Ruth Lister

Is there such a thing as objective reality? Don't worry, this column is not about to desert social policy for the dizzy heights of philosophy. However, I do find myself asking this question every time I see DSS ministers or officials extolling the virtues of the social fund which replaced single payments with a cash-limited, discretionary system of, mainly, loans in 1988.

The secretary of state's second annual report on the fund, presented to parliament just as MPs dispersed for their summer holidays, painted a positive picture of responsiveness and flexibility which was belied by the data it contained. Earlier in the year, Nicholas Scott assured MPs that "the social fund is working well, flexibly and fairly...[and that] the system was judged by the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) to be good and, indeed, imaginative."

Certainly, Mr Scott's interpretation of the SSAC's position is imaginative. In its own annual report, published last month, this official watchdog referred to its earlier criticisms of the fund, noting that, "on the evidence available to date there is no reason to withdraw our fundamental objections." The concern it expressed about the extent of unmet need, and of the effect on claimants living below the minimum income levels set by parliament because of the need to repay social fund loans (nearly 420,000 were outstanding in May), is borne out by the findings of the Benefits Research Unit (BRU) and the Social Security Research Consortium (SSRC) to be presented today to a BRU conference.

For many claimants, the social fund (made up of a community care grant (CCG)—which is the smaller element—and a loans element) represents part of the problem rather than the solution to their poverty. One of the SSAC's main concerns was the inadequacy of the social fund budget. The CCG budget for 1990-91 is £67.7m (including the latest additional allocation). The £159.6m loans budget, of course, simply represents advance payments of claimants' income-support entitlement plus a proportion written off as bad debt. In contrast, annual expenditure on single payments before the 1986 cuts stood at £335m. In a city such as Bradford, for example, this has meant a cash loss of £3.8m to the local economy.

The growing pressure on the budget is reflected in lower average amounts granted for furniture and household items (the main category of expenditure) and higher refusal rates overall. The refusal rate of 54 per cent for CCGs in 1989-90 is, moreover, an underestimate, because it takes no account of those who were discouraged from applying or of those who, having applied for a grant, were given a loan. The latter, who count as successful loan, rather than as unsuccessful grant, applications, are not identified in the official statistics. This contrasts with ministers' constant parading of the 35,000 loan applications which were paid as grants.

Nearly one in three of all budgeting loans and one in five CCGs were refused on grounds of insufficient priority. This euphemism for not enough money in the budget constituted the largest identifiable category of refusals. As the SSAC noted, some local offices have restricted payments to the "highest priority" cases only, so as to keep within budget. This tendency is likely to be aggravated by a new directive requiring social fund officers (SFOs) to manage their budget so as to give priority to high-priority needs throughout the financial year.

More "flexibility" enables the DSS to keep a lid on expenditure, containing, rather than meeting, need

Families merely facing "exceptional pressure" are accorded relatively low priority in both national and local guidance to SFOs, and consequently fare badly (including even some who have lost everything in a fire, according to the Citizens' Rights Office). The social fund commissioner has suggested that the effective exclusion from consideration of applications in the "exceptional pressure" category might constitute an (unlawful) fettering of SFOs' discretion.

Despite this increased rationing of resources, the DSS has had to bale out many local offices heading for an overspend. The latest of these additional allocations (from recycled loan repayments) was announced this month to cope with the aftermath of the High Court judgment which declared the operation of local office cash limits unlawful.

At the same time, new directives, which aim to legalise the local cash limits and tighten up their application, were issued. Area SFOs are now under a duty, at least once a month, to monitor and, if necessary, revise planned levels of expenditure. This effectively institutionalises the rapid shifting of goalposts, which makes the fund seem more like a lottery than part of a modern social security system.

It also underlines how the social fund's much vaunted flexibility works to the advantage of SFOs struggling to keep within their budgets, rather than claimants for whom it mostly spells inconsistency and uncertainty. As long as this "flexibility" enables the DSS to keep a lid on expenditure, the social fund will, indeed, be a success—if the measure of success is containing rather than meeting need. It might be even better for the DSS if, as a forthcoming BRU report suggests, it is succeeding in its ideological aim of reducing expectations of what the state will provide.

To counteract this, pressure needs to be maintained on local CCG budgets. The pursuit of a *further* review by the social fund inspectors, when a referred-back decision has been reconfirmed by the SFO, is a useful tactic because the chances of a favourable decision being substituted are obviously increased.

So what should be done at policy level? One possibility is a three-tier structure originally proposed by the SSAC and now being considered by the Labour Party.

A regular "bonus" would be paid two or three times a year to all claimants. Research suggests this would find favour with claimants themselves. The second tier would constitute a regulated system of grants to provide help with larger items such as furniture. Finally, there would be a discretionary back-up with wider powers than existed under the similar fall-back to the old single payments scheme.

Much would depend on the generosity of the bonus payments and grants. It is not a panacea for inadequate weekly benefits, but it does, at least, perhaps offer a more constructive response to the social fund than a return to the old single payments scheme.

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THE STAFFORD CENTRE a drop-in centre for people who have experienced mental illness is looking for volunteers who can contribute to the work of the Centre in a befriending capacity or by sharing creative or practical skills with centre users. For more details contact: Fiona Roberts, The Stafford Centre, 3 Stafford Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7BR. Phone 031-226 2460.

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP and watch it grow. Some children have no-one else who really listens to them. Some have little contact with a positive male figure. Join our volunteer group, men & women, and get to know one of these children. If you are interested, live within reach of Islington, and have 2/3 hours a week to spare, contact Span on 071 250 1223.

TWO SMALL CHARITIES in Cambridge working with people with learning difficulties would welcome some-one with business background to help fundraise and evolve a market strategy for our useful goods. Expenses and honorarium paid. Please contact Peter Durrant on 0223 262759/ 68040 at any time.

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THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears four times a week on Thames Televison at 5.55 approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

This week on THAMES HELP we're looking at the help available to victims of domestic violence.

Monday 1st October – Fiona's Story

Fiona left her partner last year. For two years she had been emotionally and sexually abused by him. Her local CAB put her in touch with London Womens Aid who referred her to a refuge.

Our phone lines will be open on 071 388 8282 for women who would like to talk to someone from London Womens Aid in confidence.

Tuesday 2nd October – BACKUP

BACKUP is based in Southwark and exists to support women who are living with violent partners. The service is run entirely by volunteers, including women who themselves were victims of abuse.

As well as the support they offer, they're also looking to recruit and train new volunteers. To contact the group write to BACKUP, Thames Help, PO Box 2LP, London W1H 2LP.

Wednesday 3rd October – Sam's Story

Tonight we're meeting one of BACKUP's volunteers who until two years ago was constantly abused by her husband. Now that she's free she works to help other women who are still suffering. Our phonelines will be open on 071 388 8282 for women who would like to speak to someone in confidence for advice or counselling. Women from London Womens Aid will be waiting to take their calls.

Thursday 4th October

Two years ago, THAMES HELP featured the first Domestic Violence Office to be set up by tne Metropolitan Police; now there are forty such offices. Tonight WPC Ann Merchant in Streatham tells us about the support and services they provide for victims of abuse.

THAMES HELP has produced a booklet to accompany this week's programmes, giving practical advice and information for victims of domestic violence. The booklet is free and obtainable by writing to THAMES HELP, PO Box 2LP, London W1A 2LP.

The regular Monday lunchtime edition of THAMES HELP not only previews the week's programmes but also has regular features of its own including a COMMUNITY ACTION SLOT and a VOLUNTEER NOTICEBOARD, compiled in conjunction with this page.

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

DO YOU LIKE GARDENING and would you welcome the opportunity of working with others on a local green site or managing a small garden plot of your own? Sunnyside Community Gardens, situated adjacent to Hazellville Road N.19, would very much welcome you if you do. Ring 071 263 0293 for details.

A FUNDRAISING ASSISTANT is needed urgently to help with an exciting new clothes project and similar event organising. Expenses paid. Contact Anna at Women's Environmental Network 071-490 2511.

FREE SEVEN WEEK COURSE in conflict resolution & mediation skills for aspiring youth/social/ penal workers. Contact Caroline: on 071 226 8025. Course starts mid-October.

ADFAM National Helpline for the families and friends of drug users needs volunteers to provide information & support to callers. Full training given. Expenses provided. Helpline is open 10 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday - close to South Kensington tube. Please call Anne on 071 823 9313 for further details.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED to start a small pottery group, 2 hours a week (pref. Thurs. afternoon) in a day centre for single homeless people. Please contact Cliff on 071 402 5468.

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE in Southwark is looking for volunteers to work with people with a learning difficulty, to enable them to enjoy their recreation time. Training & support given. Call Geoff Jones 071 703 0261.

MEDWAY AND SWALE KENT, Initial training for Bereavement Counsellors. Two new Branches of CRUSE are being set up and training courses starting Sept. 26th and Oct 1st respectively are being organised. A charge of £35, (or £10 consessions) will be made. For further information and application forms please contact: Mrs Margaret Lee, Bereavement Services Coordinator, Medway Hospital, Windmill Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5NY.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED. To help organise "Futures" - an open political and cultural event organised by the Communist Party. Advertising, promotional and administrative work + stewarding on the day (27th October). Expenses are paid. For more information contact Natalie on 071 278 4443.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU in Lancashire seeks volunteer advice workers. All training is provided. Time commitment of 6 hours per week. We are handling a growing debt and social security appeal caseload, and are keen to develop outreach services in the community. Expenses paid. If you are interested in challenging and varied work for further information contact Derek King on 0254 385043. Hyndburn Area C.A.B., 20-22, Whalley Road, Accrington BB5 1AA.

COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION in World Citizenship helps prepare British young people for their responsibilities in an interdependent & multicultural world. It needs two volunteers each with a minimum of 4 hours per week: one to help organise a service to provide speakers for schools and colleges; the other for general clerical help - with mailings and enquiries. Expenses refunded for coming to Seymour Mews House, London W1H. Please contact Patricia Rogers, 071 935 1752.

CHESTER AID for the Homeless requires f/time volunteer project workers to work with homeless men in Chester. Chester Aid for the Homeless has vacancies for residential volunteers in all 3 projects: an emergency hostel, night shelter and long stay resettlement centre. All volunteers receive £25 p/w + board & lodgings. For further details please contact Sally Gear on 0244 318360 or write: Roodee House, 22 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD.

S.W. LONDON PROBATION Service (boroughs of Kingston, Richmond, Merton and Sutton). Volunteers needed to help Probation Officers. The Merton Probation Office is looking for volunteers to work with Probation Officers and the people they supervise, in a variety of settings. Do you think you have what it takes? If so phone Jenny Pearson on 081-685 0075 for an informal chat, or for an application form Carole Matthews on 081-546 0081, 45 High Street, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 1LQ.

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Lineage – Friday (prior to publication on following week)
Camera ready artwork – Tuesday
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New Statesman & Society,
Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ
Telephone: 071-739-1645
Fax 071-739-9307
Telex 28449

Appointments

SOCIAL RESEARCHER

The Health Education Authority has a vacancy for an experienced social researcher in the Research Department. The structure of the Department emphasises team working and a flexible approach to workloads.
The work for this post requires the management of commissioned and in-house research projects, their evaluation and input into health promotion activities. You will be expected to provide a strong theoretical and practical contribution to a new Nutrition Programme in the HEA and related physical activity Projects. We are therefore looking for candidates who not only have a proven track record in a wide range of research methodologies but who can also evaluate data and relate them to social policies and public education campaigns. Experience of nutritional research is desirable but not essential.
The salary will be on the scale £17,376 - £20,038 inclusive. Interviews will be held in the week commencing 22 October 1990.
For further details and an application form which should be returned by 12 October 1990 please contact: The Personnel Department, Health Education Authority, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9TX. Tel: 071-383 3833 ext. 2154.
Previous applicants are thanked for their interest in this post but are not invited to reapply.
The Authority is committed to becoming a full Equal Opportunities Employer.

HEALTH EDUCATION AUTHORITY

NURSES WELFARE SERVICE

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

(salary scale from £12,300 inc. London Weighting)

Interesting and involved position. Mature, understanding person required by unique, Victoria based charity. Client contact, secretarial administrative support in small, closely-knit team. Applicants should have good communication skills and relevant qualifications/experience.

For application form and job details please write to: **Nurses Welfare Service, 16/18 Strutton Ground, London, SWIP 2HP. Completed forms should be returned by 12 October 1990.**

Strictly no agencies

BROADCASTING SUPPORT SERVICES

Media Appeals Grants Officer

Broadcasting Support Services is a charity that runs helplines, publishes viewers' guides for the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV and performs a central role in broadcast appeals such as BBC Children In Need and Comic Relief.

We are now looking for a Grants Officer to work in our media appeals section. The person appointed will be educated to degree level or equivalent and will have a wide knowledge of statutory or voluntary sector work. Working as part of a small team he or she will be responsible amongst other things for assessing and monitoring applications to the BBC Children In Need Appeal.

Salary NJC Scale PO2 £16,308-£17,655 inclusive of London Weighting (award pending).

For an application form and details please write to Rosemary Sheard at BSS, 252 Western Avenue, London W3 6XJ.

Closing date for applications: Wednesday, **October 10, 1990.**

WOMEN'S MOTOR MECHANICS WORKSHOP LTD

WMMW Ltd is a women only training centre which provides training in motor mechanics to City & Guilds. We have the following vacancy:

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING DEVELOPMENT WORKER

To be responsible for the securing of work placements and/or further training for trainees who complete the course. The successful candidate will have:

★ A knowledge of the motor trade or non-traditional areas of work for women.
★ Administrative and organisational skills.
★ The ability to teach literacy and numeracy.
★ Communication skills to carry out wide liaison at all levels.
★ The ability to monitor and identify the employment needs of women.

Salary Sc6 £14,469 p.a.

Applicants for the above post should have an understanding of women's training and a commitment to Equal Opportunities.

Application forms and job description can be obtained from: WMMW Ltd., Bay 4R, 1-3 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DE. Telephone: 071-582 2574. Closing date for applications: Monday 22 October.

Women's Motor Mechanics Workshop Ltd. is an Equal Opportunities employer and we encourage applications from all sections of the community.

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Please state classification.....

Post coupon to:
Classified Department,
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Freepost, London, E2 8BR

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers requires a Research Assistant at its Central Office in Manchester.

The successful applicant will be expected to provide support services to National Officers and participate in the general work of the department. It would be an advantage for applicants to have an appreciation of the Trade Union Movement and experience and/or formal training in the Social and economic background against which it operates. Salary £11,250 p.a. - £12,666 p.a. (under review).

Applicants by letter giving full details in envelope marked "Research Assistant" must be received by 19th October 1990. Letters should be addressed to the General Secretary, Usdaw, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6LJ.

Usdaw is an Equal Opportunities employer.

Usdaw
UNITY IS STRENGTH

UNION OF SHOP, DISTRIBUTIVE AND ALLIED WORKERS

GENERAL SECRETARY

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament seeks a General Secretary with a commitment to and knowledge of the peace movement. The suitable candidate must have management experience and the ability to draw together a team and motivate people. S/he should be a good communicator, decision maker and organiser. Knowledge of personnel matters and employment legislation desirable.

Salary: £17,500.
Holidays 25 days per annum plus bank holidays.
Closing date 19 October.
Interviews week beginning 29 October.

For job description and application form please contact Lorraine Jones at CND, 162 Holloway Rd, London N7 8DQ. Tel: 071 700 2357.

CND strives to be an equal opportunities employer.

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...so if you're recruiting for your charity call the New Statesman and Society classified team on **071-739 1645.**

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SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH UNIT/
CENTRE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS

RESEARCH FELLOW

NURSING AND COMMUNITY CARE

Community Nursing will be a vital element in the implementation of community care policies but little is known about how health authorities decide on the number of community nurses they need.

A Research Fellow is required to join a Department of Health funded project investigating how health authorities plan and fix their community nursing establishments. The appointment is for two years.

You should have a good social science degree (preferably in sociology, health or social policy or nursing studies) and research experience in a relevant field. Fieldwork will necessitate periods away from York.

Salary within the range: £16,755-£24,930 per annum.

Six copies of applications with full curriculum vitae and the names of three referees, should be sent by Friday, 19 October 1990, to the Personnel Office, University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD. There are no printed application forms. Further particulars are available (tel: 0904 432051): please quote reference number 4/6326.

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

New Statesman & Society Recruitment

For full details on rates and dates of future special issues please contact the Classified Advertisement Department and ask for Michael or Susan

Telephone: 071-739-1645

Courses

WEEKEND COURSES

AT STEPHENSON HALL

▶ Can I Help You
Telephone counselling skills; particularly useful for staff working in health/social care settings. **16-18 Nov 1990, 9-10 Feb 1991.**

▶ Working with Women's Strengths
To examine the processes of empowerment and disempowerment and how workers become part of these processes. **2-4 Nov 1990.**

▶ Sexually Abused Staff
A disclosure of sexual abuse is often given to staff who have had similar experience in their past. This course is designed to help them and those who work with them. **23-25 Nov 1990.**

▶ Assertiveness for Women
This course is designed to address the importance of assertiveness for women both in their daily life and in their workplace. **12-14 Oct 1990.**

▶ Sex and Sexuality
Therapeutic work with children and adults dealing with child sexual abuse is stressful, painful and often confusing. This course will allow participants to explore the interplay of the personal and professional in this area of work. **11-13 Jan 1991.**

COST (INCLUDING FULL RESIDENCE): £259.00

Detailed information packs are available on:

- ▶ Skill based career progression courses
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Contact: Val Darvell or Elaine Ward on 071 354 2337

STEPHENSON HALL, NCH TRAINING AND CONFERENCE CENTRE
85c Highbury Park, London N5 1UD

MIND

Working with the Mental Health Act Code

and

Diversion from Custody:

Working with the Mentally Disordered Suspect or Defendant

Working with the Mental Health Act Code
The Code of Practice has been in force since December 1989, affecting a vast range of professional decision making under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Diversion from Custody
The revised Codes of Practice under PACE, and recent Home office guidance to the Police, the Courts, the Probation and Prison Services transforms the position of the mentally disordered suspect or defendant. Procedures for diversion from custody and sentencing practice may signficantly change.

MIND's Legal Department is holding two training days on each of these subjects for lawyers, social work and health service staff, as follows:

Leeds: Hilton Hotel
26th November 1990 (Code)
27th November 1990 (Diversion from Custody)

London: Regent's College
10th December 1990 (Code)
11th December 1990 (Diversion from Custody)

Cost: £90 per person, per day
£70 per person, per day for bookings of 4 or more places
£150 per person if booking both days
Cost includes lunch, refreshments, comprehensive notes (and an HMSO copy of the Code of Practice for Code training day).

Details/booking form from:

Training Department (Code/Diversion)
MIND, 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED
Fax 071-323 0061

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BROMLEY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

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For information phone:
Sally Weeks 081-462 6331, Ext: 270.

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CLES CENTRE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

Alberton House St Mary's Parsonage
Manchester M3 2WJ
Tel: 061-834 7036 Fax: 061-835 1589

CENTRE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

A registered national charity, based in the North of England, dedicated to regenerating the regions, the Centre for Local Economic Strategies works with and for local authorities. CLES makes an original and major contribution to policy debates on economic development and employment issues. Our subscriber services division provides quality research, education and management training, library and information services.

EUROPE OF THE REGIONS

5th Cles Annual Conference

Date: 16-17 November 1990
Venue: Dundee

Programme includes: plenary and workshop sessions with key-note national and international speakers; local study tours; exhibitions and a civic reception.

Confirmed speakers: **Phillip Lowe** Chef de Cabinet to Bruce Millan, **Glyn Ford MEP, Mike Cooley** Consultant (European Commission), **Cllr Jean McFadden** Convenor of COSLA, **Cllr May Ward** Leader of the City of Dundee District Council and **Campbell Christie** General Secretary STUC.

Themes include: European Community Programmes; Transport; Eastern Europe; Economic Development Initiatives; Training; Technology; Environment; Cross-Community Co-operation; Industrial policy; Role of the Community in Integration of the Disadvantaged; Peripheral Regions and a Social Europe and Equal Opportunities.

Cost: Cles members £165.00 + VAT
Non-members £225.00 + VAT
Voluntary Organisations £125.00 + VAT

Contact: Atiha Mohamed
Annual Conference
Centre for Local Economic Strategies
Alberton House
St. Mary's Parsonage
Manchester M3 2WJ
Tel: 061 834 7036
Fax: 061 835 1589

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The CLES European Research Network is our new company which offers a public sector consultancy service, blending our unique role as local government's economic think tank with our practical experience of local government planning, projects and strategy.

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- training and labour markets
- urban and regional economic development
- European strategies and economic initiatives
- transport and economic development
- developing a green local economy
- managing change in local authorities
- sector studies

Conferences

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE
bfi

A two day conference on the roles played by broadcasting in the process of German unification willl take place on **26th and 27th October at the National Film Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 8XT.**

Speakers from East and West Germany will discuss past and present broadcasting structures, international news coverage of events last autumn and how the media are preparing for unity.

Conference fee £40.00

Application details from
Tana Wollen
British Film Institute
Television and Projects Unit
21 Stephen Street
London
W1P 1PL
Tel: 071 255 1444. Fax: 071 436 7950

GOETHE-INSTITUT

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Fellowships

NUFFIELD COLLEGE OXFORD OX1 1NF

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Applications are invited from graduates wishing to undertake research in some aspect of Economics, Politics, Sociology (including some aspects of Social Psychology), Recent Economic, Social or Political History, Industrial Relations, Management Studies, Public and Social Administration, or International Relations. Candidates must be not more than five years beyond first graduation or at a comparable stage in their academic career. The Fellowships will be for three years subject to completion of a doctorate in an approved period, and will provide accommodation and a salary or grant.

Nuffield College is an Equal Opportunities employer.

Particulars from the Admissions Secretary.
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Agenda Tue 2nd Oct

PROF. BADE ONIMODE talks on the politics of IMF adjustment at IFAA. 23, Bevendon Street, London N1. Tuesday October 2nd 6.30 pm, tel: 071 251 1503.

Accommodation to Let

SMALL ROOM 3/4 nights midweek £9 per night. Stoke Newington N16. Tel: 071 249 0857.

N/S FEMALE for large (18 ft by 12 ft) airy spacious room. Two mins from tube and BR in North West London £250 per calender month. Ring 081 961 0901.

SW16 SINGLE ROOM IN ATTRACTIVE HOUSE. all mod cons, garden, low Poll, offered to house-trained mature individual for £200 pcm. Sense of Humour also welcome. 081-769 2435.

Meetings

SCILLA ELLWORTHY, chair, Oxford Research Group will speak on "The decision machine - Assumptions of the nuclear decision makers." At a public meeting with opportunity for discussion in small groups, Saturday 6th Oct 10am - 1pm, Primrose Hill Community Centre, Fitzroy Rd, NW1. Organised by "Psycho-therapists against Nuclear Disaster". Admission £4 at the door or call Diana 081 977 6303 to book ahead.

Miscellaneous

ARE YOU CELIBATE? Have you given up sex because you think it is boring, overrated, or just because you find it more fulfilling to abstain? BBC Producer would like to talk to you for forthcoming documentary. All replies will be answered and treated in confidence.
Box (37) 474.

For Sale

NEW SOCIETY BACK ISSUES. Oct 1963 - Dec 1973. Feb 1981 - Dec 1986. Total 770 copies. Offers invited. 0736 60823 after 6.30 pm.

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EARN EXTRA MONEY from your own home-based business. Huge profits. Genuine opportunities. No outlay. Free details. LIFELINES P.O. Box 1145 (C) Salisbury, SP3 5YD.

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PRAGUE: S/c well-equipped flat. Sleeps 4. 15 minutes city centre by convenient Metro. £120 per week. For details: 071-833 3056.

Holiday/Travel

TEN AMAZING ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOURS for '91 including China, India, the American South-west, the Orkneys, Bulgaria, Pompeii and Yemen, FRESCO, Dept X, 12-14 Hall Square, Denbigh, Clwyd LL16 3NU. Tel: (0745) 816268. (24 hrs).

Personal

"OLD FRIENDS", five years of civilised introduction for the over 40s: A countrywide service with a personal touch. Details from Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. Tel 071-226 5432.

Heartsearch

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, FEMALE, 28, graduate. Many interests, inexpensive tastes. Loves countryside, music, film. Lovely son, 3. Seeks kind, good humoured male friend. Southwest/ anywhere. Please reply Box (36) 454.

ASIAN INDIAN GIRL; 29 years; practising Jehovahs Witness; working in London. Wishes to contact sincere Jehovahs Witness with view to marriage. Please write to Box (32) 410.

LAID BACK IN SURREY. Attractive and intelligent woman 37, with two kids, who is really passionate by nature, seeks a hunky man for having fun with. Please write to Box (37) 465.

LIVELY, OUTGOING, young at heart woman loves travel, books, animals, children, countryside. Francophile would enjoy meeting man with similar tastes aged late 50's early 60's. London/Brighton based. Write to Box (36) 464.

MIDLAND FEMALE (early 40's) invites compatible male (perhaps London - perhaps nearer?) to share weekends, friendships, more? Please reply to Box (37) 466.

WIDELY TRAVELLED PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, late 40s, has moved to North East and seeks new relationships. Enjoys the outdoor life, with a large dash of culture, and a dash of the psyche. Please reply to Box (37) 467.

CREATIVE, PROFESSIONAL, literary lounge leo (44), seeks romance with loquacious, lissom, lingeried lady (30's). North West domicile with frequent excursions to London for a culture fix. Please reply to Box (37) 468.

ONE MAN (RETIRED) and his two dogs require warm sensitive humorous female to share attractive Yorkshire Dales house. Box (37) 469.

MAN 40+ tall slim non-smoker. Doesn't do mornings. Solvent intellectual, Brighton. Could relocate. Needs affectionate woman for caring and sharing. Replies to Box (37) 470.

TALL, INTELLIGENT WOMAN (39) with sense of humour seeks similar man. Cambridge/London. Please write to Box (37) 471.

HUMOROUS, sometimes lazy, female, existentialist sought by similar, sometimes smokey, male professional for occasional visits to seaside, second hand bookshops, Sainsburys, cheap cafes, disused churches and Estate Agents. London. Reply to Box (37) 472.

YOUNG MAN'S UNQUENCHABLE ARDOUR needs cooling by the attentions of an older lady. Please write to Box (37) 473.

SOULMATE SOUGHT, lively-minded, interesting man with joie-de-vivre, keen on books, music, walking, travel for similar woman, early fifties. Home Counties west. Box (34) 428.

EDUCATED MALE, YOUNG 60, urgently needs male/female companion; voluble, interested applied arts, any age/colour, to live with. Good personality/sense of humour. Box (36) 453.

ELIGIBLE BACHELOR, 35, 6ft., professional, affluent, homes in London and Wiltshire, awaits entrapment by attractive younger lady. Photo/ phone please. Box (36) 458.

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Your advertisement appears in *New Statesman & Society* with your own personalised telephone number. Readers leave recorded messages for you on this number and by using your own personalised security code only you have access to these messages.

To answer any of these adverts simply dial the telephone number below your chosen ad.

Tel: 0839 81 2000 Teledating index and information line
Tel: 0839 81 2001 What is Teledating? (24 hours).

SUCCESSFUL, DIFFERENT gentleman and much more, seeking Miss right. (for more details, please call): Teledate: 0839 812076.

TO PLACE YOUR ADVERTISEMENT PLEASE CALL 071 465 8880. Teledate: 0839 - 812077.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL females seek Mr right, interesting and intelligent call us and find out. Teledate: 0839 - 812081.

ATTRACTIVE SLIM FEMALE, greenish, fun loving, loves the country, seeks ecologically aware, intelligent male. Teledate: 0839 - 812469.

LADIES, if the men in this advertisement do not match your dreams please call. Teledate: 0839 - 812622.

CREATIVE WOMAN (38), stylish, musical, loves travel seeks sensitive, humorous, articulate man. Teledate: 0839 - 812623.

CARING FEMALE, 35, socially aware, varied interests, loves cooking, theatre, dreams of meeting similar caring male. Teledate: 0839 - 812864.

Teledating uses Premium Rate Services. Calls on TELEDATING numbers commencing 0839 are charged at 33p per minute cheap rate and 44p per minute at all other times.

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1/6 page 131×65
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2 column 132
3 column 200
Classified
1 column 45
2 column 98
3 column 149
4 column 200
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Registration: punch registered
Screen: (4-col): 150/in, 60/cm
Screen: (mono): 120/in, 48/cm
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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3144 Set by Tom Foolery
Describe any philosophical, religious or scientific theory in words of one syllable.

Report by Ms de Meaner
An odd competition, but what else can one expect from young Tom! I hadn't realised that there would be so many one-syllable words out there for you to conjure with. So many, in fact, that most of you were able to write perfectly innocuous entries defining the "ism" of your choice without its being apparent that there was anything unusual about them at all. Others, with a bit more get up and go, tried to make it more difficult for themselves by writing simple-minded "explanations for tots". These were all rather twee. The best ostentatiously paraded their cleverness at avoiding multi-syllable words, or were (even more impressively) able to be amusing as well. Quite a few of you chose Freud's theories to expand upon (no problem there! No winners either), so I was impressed, in particular, by David Heaton's roundabout way of avoiding the word "Descartes". What amazed me most was the number of old-timers who sent in entries simply *filled* with two-syllable words. A tenner to the winners, and no extras!

Descartes's cogito
I think, and so I am. This was said by a man in France whose name I can't call to mind. As a point from which to start, he sought that which was free from doubt. Am I? I think I am. Do *you* think I am? Do you see me? Or do you just think you see me? And how do I know what it is that you think? I know what you say you think, yes. But for me that is not proof. I must start from what I *know*. And what do I know? Well, I know that I think. Good. And if I think, I must be. Yes. Then let me start with this: I think, and so I am.

David Heaton

Marx's labour theory of value
Things you buy—say, shirts—cost you far more than the cost of the stuff that goes to make them. That is to say, shirts are worth more than the cloth they are made of—or at least, they should be! So where has the worth that things have come from?

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

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Some of the worth of a shirt comes from those who made up their minds to make shirts in the first place—the ones who own the place where the shirts are made and the tools that are used to make them. Most of it, though, comes from those who do the work: they are the ones who take the cloth and make a shirt from it, when you get right down to it. This means that most of the cash which the shirts fetch when they are sold is due to them; as it is, though, most of it goes to those whom they work for. So, the folk who work stay poor, while the ones who own the means of work get rich. This is what is wrong with the world.

Mr Jones

Existentialism
The good news is that God is dead. The bad news is this means that life does not mean much at all. But this is no cause for gloom and doom. In fact, you must not think of death, doom or gloom at all, but life, which is all you've got. If you think good thoughts, then life is good (for you). The good news is that you do not have to take crap from chaps who tell you what to do or think. You can tell them to piss off. The bad news is that they make you feel like hell. God may be dead but hell is not. "Not fair!" you may say, in which case, you have got the point. And if you can be like the man who rolled a stone to the top of a hill and when he got it there it fell back down to the foot of it once more, and then he had to start to roll it back up once more and so on all his life, if you can be like him and have a laugh, that is as much as you can hope for.

Jim Yorke

Zen Buddhism
Zen is not what you do. You can not do Zen, like a sport. Nor is Zen what you think, since Zen is not thought, and in fact Zen is where you do not think, or where you think it is not. Zen just is. You need not strive and strain to get Zen, as to try for Zen is to lose it: it is found when you have ceased to look for it. But Zen is the way, so there is a way to Zen. Props can help. You can put a rose, or some kind of bloom, in a vase and stare at it and you may then reach the state which you seek. But it is not the rose that does it, and not your look. You will know when the time comes. A force will be there that is not you, and not in you. It would be more true to say (though "true" is a crude word, and words are crude tools) that you are in *it*, and what you seem to do *it* does. Drain your mind of all the things that are as a rule in it. Be not there, and where you are will be the place that you are at, but not by an act of will. When you lose the self, the self that you have cast off will make way for what you are when you are no more the you you have been. Then all is plain.

Basil Ransome-Davies

Behaviourism
Hi. It's like this: take dogs' heads and show them food while you ring bells. Soon they'll drool when you just ring bells. Take birds, and watch how they hold their heads. Now, place food in a place to which they don't, as a rule, lift their necks. If you show the food, fast, each (rare) time they lift their necks to that height, they'll soon crane up lots of times. You can change, with ease, the way beasts act—*and* how we act. Some speak of mind, of how we feel. Stuff that. We can all be trained to act in set ways. The view that we do things on our own, by free will, is a fraud, a sham. Ditch this view, and we can run the world well. If we praise folk when they do good works, we make sure they will be good. And, when they are slaves to the new codes, they will in fact feel more free than in the here and now. Junk free will, and we'll all feel good.

Bill Greenwell

The Big Bang
All that is, all that was, all that will be, is due to the Big Bang. It starts with a small thing, a spot. Just one. Then, like a big, big bomb, it goes bang. All the stuff in the small spot starts to move out. On and on it goes. It still goes on now. On the way some bits slow down and make stars, the Sun, the Earth, the Moon, and so on. No Big Bang, no Earth. No Earth, no us. One day, so they say, all the bits will stop, turn back, and, in a long, long time, make a small spot like the one which went bang in the first place. Then, so they say, it all starts off once more. This all takes years and years, more years than a man can know. So no one at all knows if the Big Bang tale is right or wrong. If it is right, fine. If it is not right, then a lot of wise men have spent a lot of time and cash to get it wrong. Are they right? No one knows. The Big Bang is just the best tale we have right now.

J Timson

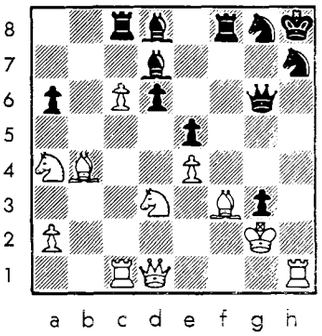
No 3147 Set by E O Parrott
A single sentence that could have changed world history. Entries to be in by 11 October.

CHESS

It used to be a fairly easy matter to list the top ten or 12 players in the world. From time to time one would have to add a name to the list and delete someone whose powers were in decline. But, overall, there was a considerable degree of stability among the cast, who were enacting an epic contest to be counted in decades rather than years.

The very title of Grandmaster reflected a sort of settled pecking order. Once a young contender had reached this elevated status, he could look forward to a career of élite competition stretching over something like 20 years. Those days are gone. What we have now is a bubbling ferment of competition, from which a new list of the top ten has to be drawn up every six months. There are so many more opportunities for new talents.

Meanwhile a whole host of players who had been locked up inside the fastness of the USSR are venturing abroad to establish international reputations—and, of course, pick up foreign currency in the process. Amid all this change and confusion, Kasparov and Karpov have stood unrivalled, like twin peaks towering above a striving mass. These two are not just the best around. They are, by quite a wide margin, the strongest players of all time. Can anyone else reach their level? Only time will tell, but if I had to select a future rival for Kasparov it would be Boris Gelfand. When Gelfand and Kasparov met at Linares this year, the result was a mighty clash—an inconclusive game, but also a portent of a future struggle on a larger scale.

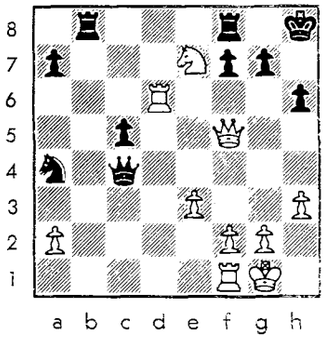


Gelfand - Kasparov, Linares 1990. King's Indian. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 0-0 6 Nf3 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Nd3 f5 11 Bd2 Nf6 12 f3 Kh8

So far, we have followed a well-worn path to one of the standard positions of the King's Indian. In the past the standard treatment was 12...f4 followed by the advance of the g-pawn. Black gets a K-side attack that way, but sealing the centre allows White a free hand on the other wing. The world champion prefers to retain the tension in the centre with a series of subtle preparatory moves. **13 Rc1 c5 14 g4 a6** Now he even envisages play on the Q-side with ...b7-b5. **15 Nf2 h6** With the positional threat of 16...fxg4 17 fxg4 g5, followed by ...Ng6-f4. **16 h4 fxg4 17 fxg4 Neg8 18 Kg2 Nh7 19 Rh1 Bf6 20 g5!** Gelfand responds actively to the fluid K-side and sacrifices a pawn to open the h-file. **hxg5 21 h5 Qe8 22 b4!?** Again he chooses a very active move, but it may not be the best. In his notes, Gelfand points out that the standard blockading try 22 Bg4 is ineffective because of 22...Bxg4 23 Qxg4 Nh6. But 22 Qa4 and 22 Be3 are alternatives. **cxb4 23 Na4 Bd8 24 Bxb4 Bd7 25 hxg6 Qxg6 26 c5 g4** Kasparov is in his element; full-scale battle across the whole board. But here at last he has an opponent prepared to meet him blow for blow. **27 c6 g3 28 Nd3 bxc6 29 dxc6 Rc8! 30 Bf3** Black is winning after 30 cxd7 Rxc1 31 Nxc1 Rf2+ 32 Kg1 Qxe4. However, Gelfand subsequently thought his best chance of advantage was 30 Bxd6! Qxd6 31 cxd7 Rxc1 32 Nxc1. *See Diagram above.* **Rxf3! 31 Qxf3 Bg4 32 Qxg3 Qxe4+ 33 Kg1 Ngf6 34 Bxd6!**

At first sight, this appears to be a blunder since Black now wins a piece. But otherwise Kasparov had full compensation for the exchange, whereas now White seizes the initiative. **Qd4+ 35 Nf2 Qxd6 36 Nxg4 Qd4+ 37 Nf2 Qxa4 38 Qxe5 Rc7 39 Rh2 Rg7+ 40 Rg2 Bc7 41 Qf5 Qxa2** By an unlikely route, the Black Q just manages to get back to the first rank and cope with the threat of **Qc8+. 42 Qc8+ Qg8 43 Qxg8+ Kxg8 44 Rxg7+ Kxg7 45 Nd3** ½ ½ Finally the draw becomes clear through a mutual exhaustion of resources.

That was an extremely difficult game. With the aid of Gelfand's annotations from *New in Chess*, I have tried to give some insight into the major decisions involved. But it would take many hours of analysis to fathom all the complications. Devotees of the King's Indian will set about that task happily enough. The rest of us might find a clear-cut tactical finish positively relaxing by contrast. The diagram below is taken from Jukic-Dutreeuw, Geneva Open 1990. White to play and win.



George Botterill

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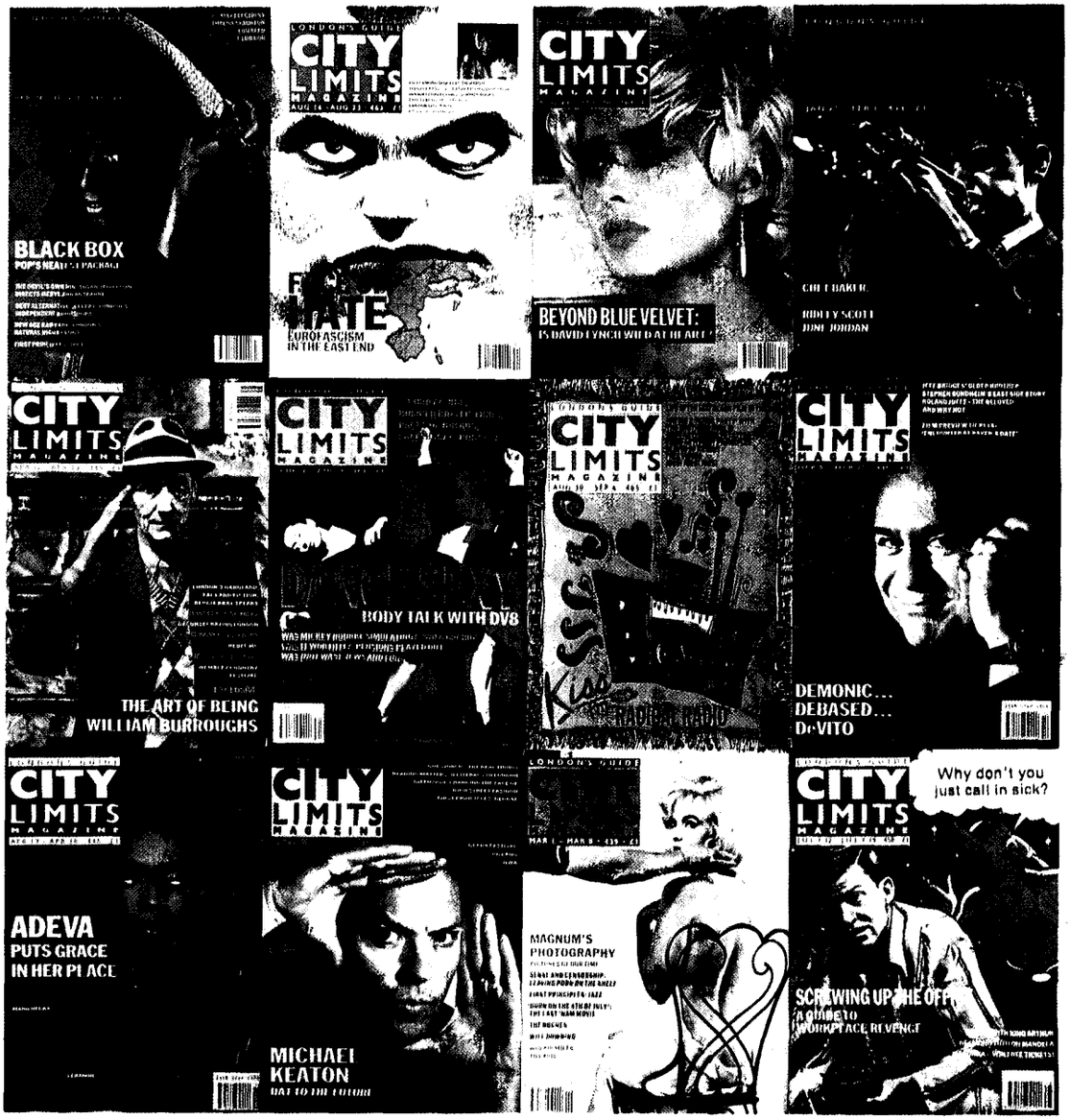

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